The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

James H. Robinson:

Imperative Choices

J. R. Brokhoff • Why Observe Lent?

Owen Hutchison • His Testing and Ours

F. W. Schroeder • Growing Together

E. L. Allen • Will He Rise Again?

Kendrick Strong • My Old Testament

Francis B. Sayre • A Challenge

ELWYN A. SMITH • EXERCISE OF CHARITY

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The Pulpit

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In this Issue —

ELWYN A. SMITH, dean of the Theological Seminary at the University of Dubuque, Dubuque, Iowa, addressed his faculty and students with the message reproduced on page 4. An ordained Presbyterian, U.S.A., minister, Dr. Smith formerly was university pastor with the Westminster Foundation for the National Capitol area and associate youth editor of his denomination's Board of Christian Education. He is a member of the Council on Theological Education and author of *Men Called Him Master.* Since graduating from Wheaton College he has received M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard University, followed by a B.D. from Yale Divinity School.

JAMES H. ROBINSON, as the 1954 Lyman Beecher lecturer at Yale, was invited to send a sermon for The Pulpit's special January issue honoring Founder Charles Clayton Morrison. When it became necessary to omit one sermon last month, Dr. Robinson's message was held over for first place this month. As minister of the Church of the Master (Presbyterian, U.S.A.) and director of Morningside Community Center, both of which he founded in 1938 soon after his graduation from Union Theological Seminary, Dr. Robinson serves thousands of Harlem residents through interracial camps, a psychiatric clinic, a nursery, a recreation center, a credit union and a co-op store. In addition, he has become a world leader through his travels for the Presbyterian, U.S.A., Board of Foreign Missions which in 1951 sent him on a six-month mission to students around the world, and in 1954 sponsored his three-month trip through 11 African countries. He is an editorial associate of The Pulpit and author of a series of four articles appearing currently in the *Christian Century.*

J. R. BROKHOFF last year became pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Charlotte, N. C., after ten years as pastor of Atlanta's Lutheran Church of the Redeemer. His interests have included broadcasting and ecumenical activities, professorial duties at Emory University, a term as councillor of the United Lutheran Church to the National Lutheran Council, and authorship of several books.

OWEN HUTCHISON's sermon "Jesus and Our Choices" had been scheduled for this issue before his death in Jan. 1955. For eight years he had been pastor of the Silverlake Community Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles. During and after World War II he served almost three years as an Army chaplain. Last fall his *Christian Love in Everyday Living* (see review in this issue) was published by Westminster.

F. W. SCHROEDER, president of Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, Mo., is one of the most interested editorial associates of The Pulpit. Before becoming head of the seminary in 1941 he was for 22 years pastor of Tabor Evangelical and Reformed Church in Chicago.

E. L. ALLEN, divinity professor at King's College, Newcastle upon Tyne in England, preached the sermon on page 18 in Felling Methodist Church.

KENDRICK STRONG, minister of the Brooklyn Heights Congregational Church in Cleveland, Ohio, first preached the sermon "What the Old Testament Means to Me" in Temple B'nai Israel at Oshkosh, Wis., where for seven years prior to 1954 he was the minister of the First Congregational Church.

FRANCIS B. SAYRE, who was for five years U. S. High Commissioner to the Philippines, has served more recently as the personal representative in Japan of Episcopal Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill. To accept this appointment he resigned as U. S. delegate to the U.N. Trusteeship Council. Thus he speaks from firsthand knowledge of needs in other lands when he writes in the interest of Church World Service's 1956 appeal for overseas relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction, to be climaxed March 11 by One Great Hour of Sharing.

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Memo:

Do problems ever come single-file anywhere? Certainly not in this office. Here they swarm, all demanding instant ...ention, and all with nibs on the same instant. ...irst, there was the resignation of Charles Clay... Morrison who wanted to get at his memoirs— ...l by the way, no sooner said than done: a first ...ft of one chapter is already on paper. This meant ...t in addition to the mechanics of this journal's ...duction, the editor's page devolved upon me, and ...h it the necessity for a decision on how to handle ... I am grateful for Dr. Morrison's kindness, and ... the Christian Century Foundation's confidence, ... I am not misled about myself by either. Until ... readers have missed Dr. Morrison's page for ...hile, it would be folly for me to try to duplicate ... There was a logic and a handiness about its for... ...t which makes it a natural structure for this ...ge, so we may come back to it after while. But ... the time being, T.A.G.—this is canny, not ...inking—will not put his efforts down within ...mparison-range of Dr. Morrison's long tradition ... excellence. Till later, then, no Event of the ...onth, Book of the Month, Thought for the Month. ...Then there was the printing problem that came ...cause our printing contract happened to shift ...mpanies at the same time the editors shifted. ...is meant new schedules and new people to work ...th—and new problems. Like the fact that some ... our usual type faces were not available at the ...w firm. Nothing hard about that, it would seem. ...st pick another clear, similar type. But there are ...veral type faces, apparently, equally clear and ...ually simple, but each with its own subtle stylis... ... integrity. So you find yourself debating: Bodoni ... Garamond vs. Caslon. And then there is the ...oblem of size: 10 point or 12 point or 10 on 12 ...int or 8 or 16 or who knows on what point. Help. ...never had it in seminary. You see here how it all ...me out. Don't be surprised if we tinker with it ...hile.

That wasn't all, though. The advertising depart... ...ent has long agitated for the last pages of the ...agazine for its clients. Advertising is a service to ...aders in its announcement of what is available to ...em, and furthermore, it helps hold the line on ...bscription rates. So there was the problem of ...here to put the copy which used to fill the final ...o pages of The Pulpit. The solution you have before you this minute. The last became first. Introductory details were moved up into introductory positions. Our statistics and credentials lead off, the contents of the issue are listed, biographical notes are taken from the fine print at the bottom of scattered columns and set forth together, and For the Record is evidently kneeded into the editor's page. Absolutely no claims are made that this is a better arrangement. It does make some important people happy, and it is hoped it won't make any of the readers too unhappy. They are all-important.

So began the new regime, beset behind and before. I'd probably still be hamstrung and hog-tied by troubles if Geneva Booker were not steady at my side. You will find her name listed for the first time on the masthead as Copy Editor, but you have met her before. Every issue of The Pulpit that has come out in the last year has been a monument to the triumph of her taste, skill, patience and perseverance over my untutored impulse. I am learning, I hope, but without her I'd have been sunk before starting.

Our mail indicates that last month's issue met general approval. Most letters asked for more of the same. The trouble is, as Harold Walker wrote, there just aren't enough Beecher lecturers to go around. We had one left from January, though, so we tie over last month's gala with the inclusion here of a recent sermon of the most recent Beecher lecturer, James Robinson. The other sermons introduce themselves. As always, it is hoped that they will be found appropriate.

One last word about some of the small features. I do hope that the poetry of Siegmund A. E. Betz is being appreciated. These poems were asked for, because it seems to me they combine a classic devotion with contemporary insight in an expression of uncommon grace and sophistication. Too often Christian poetry today is commonplace when it wants to be clear, esoteric when it wants to be sophisticated. Dr. Betz will yet be recognized, I predict, as one of this generation's very gifted poets.

If there had been an Event of the Month on this page, the Student Volunteer Movement meeting at Athens, Ohio, would have been it. For that great international quadrennial assembly, table prayers were prepared by sixteen leaders long associated with student Christian movements. Two of these blessings are included here this month; the rest will follow in the next few Pulpits.

T. A. G.

By Elwyn A. Smith

THE EXERCISE OF

CHARITY is the virtue of forbearing faults plainly visible in others; a capacity for putting the happiest construction upon acts which might, in another mood, be considered as evidence of outright wickedness; the cultivation of an attitude toward people which means that when they come to us, whether for help, or in hatred, we can receive them without prejudice, fear or illusion.

Charity does not come naturally; quite the opposite is true. By nature we tend to defend ourselves by cutting another person down to size. Illusion is also a favorite recourse, because it works to protect us. One kind of illusion informs us that the other fellow is really better than he is. In this case, we congratulate ourselves on our charity and comfort ourselves that no occasion exists that demands courage of us. The other illusion is that a man is worse than he is. This illusion has the merit of releasing and justifying every impulse to strike back.

Difficult to Practice

Charity is so difficult to exercise, even for one who has received abundant gifts of it, that a man must know a few things about himself in order to exercise it at all.

Charity is easier if one knows that a particular act may not be either the logical cause or the inevitable result of the true personal character of another or, for that matter, even typical of him. Every one of us has at least two trends within, which Paul called the old man and the new man. Since Christ has assumed the throne, the old man does not consistently have his way, but he does not fail to assert himself. Cruel and inconsiderate behavior, far from proving that character is bad, may be *prima facie* evidence that a dreadful internal struggle for the soul of a person is going on.

I have a friend whose behavior toward me swings from extremes of loyalty to radical, preposterous and higgling criticism. What am I to make of his conduct? My first problem is to decide which of the many faces he shows me will become the basis of my own attitude. Will I hate him because I consider his faithless actions the truth of the matter? Will I love him because of his sporadic loyalty? Will I laugh at him within myself because of the bitter humor of his inconsistency? Will I shrug him off as a person of no consequence, or revenge myself upon him by scratching him from my list of friends? Whatever I do, I must remember that much that he does is not typical. One sometimes wishes that such a person would maintain one attitude lon enough to reveal something really typical!

What our friends do is often not the result o anything lasting, nor ought their misdeeds be per mitted to produce any enduring effects. Their be havior is just plain erratic—evidence that a struggl is going on for their soul. Where such a struggle i recognizable, there I find my own call to duty i relation to the person. Not in what they say or d to me, nor in whether they trust or hate me, but i the fact that I am to be a minister to them of God' love in their struggle—here I find a clear intimatio of my relationship to them. This supersedes m feelings, my sensitivity, my infinitely tender ego— all these treasures I must lavishly abandon an grandly ignore, if I am to discover my relationshi to a person who seldom acts charitably toward me

Charity is possible to one who knows with some precision the point beyond which he loses his own capacity for objective judgment on account of per sonal involvement. Asked for his estimate of another person, a man recently spoke rather generally for a few moments and then plunged headlong into an account of an incident in which he himself had been deeply implicated. About half way through he paused to say: "You must remember, of course, that I was all mixed up in this thing." He continued to his conclusion that the man under discussion lacked courage, and then repeated: "My account of this may be biased. I was very much involved personally." Though he did not reject his conclusions, he clearly recognized that they had come to him through profound personal offense.

Objective Judgment Necessary

Who knows the truth about a man? One who has been hurt by him? The man who has stood on the outside, a mere spectator to the conflict? What could he know of the inward truth of the matter? The marginal participant may throw a few rocks and get a little dirty but he can still enjoy the fracas. Above all, he does not get hurt.

In one way, real understanding is the privilege of a participant. An issue is seldom fully apparent to a man who has not felt the force of controversy as well as listened to it. Yet participation can easily cease to be purposeful swimming and become drowning. Activity in solving a problem can cease to be work and become flailing on flight. He who is not so much participant as victim is not the man to say what is the truth of a matter.

CHARITY

Charity comes hard to a hurt man; it is possible practice charity only if one clearly sees at what nt his own participation has lost direction and come formless self-defense. Difficult though it is, e must learn in retrospect to recognize the point which the hurt has dimmed vision. A man who es not know that point cannot tell whether his lgment was right or not; he is at a loss, therefore, exercise charity. The Christian man must under- nd himself well enough to know when he has ached the point where feeling floods out charity, after that is passed, opinion loses its real worth d every criticism becomes a blow aimed to kill.

Inexhaustible Demands

Basically, what kind of demand do you make on others? Do you require that they behave in an ceptable way toward yourself? We demand much e beside: that people be palpably sincere, hard orking, well-mannered, neatly dressed, grammati- l and more. Our list of demands on others is in- haustible; and when all is said and done, we may ll dislike them for something we cannot name.

The answer is not to reduce the length of this list: e question is whether our relationship to others ll be based upon a demand made by our own ego -and a good deal of the time that is all we mean our ideals and standards—or whether our rela- onship will be based on something else. Let me opose that it should rest on one fact, well known all: that all these people, with or without manner grammar, college degree or Ph.D.—or their morn- g coffee—are invited in the name of Christ Jesus join themselves to the eternal company of which e himself is Lord.

Let us clarify this by distinguishing between ap- roval and acceptance. Our tendency is to accept nly those whom we approve. This is the method mployed by dogs upon first meeting one another. hristians who know about grace, however, accept ersons without approving them. To accept a person not automatically to approve all he does or is, ven though it is conventional to imagine that ac- eptance does imply approval. It was precisely this onvention that got Jesus into trouble for accepting he homage of a woman of the streets.

To approve is to measure, to apply the law, to udge and at length to say a passionless Yes. To ccept, however, is to affirm without inspection that he person shall be received. Approval here is a mat- er aside; the question is not even introduced. Once acceptance is granted, however, approval bears quite a different aspect. Disapproval of a person not accepted is a heartless No; disapproval that follows upon acceptance partakes of the charity of God.

Approval and Acceptance

One who is accepted in love can be shaped, even broken by the law of God—and by this healed of his sins. But the first breath of disapproval of one whom we have not accepted in the love with which we love ourselves is categorical condemnation, an open invitation to hatred, an irremediable breach of fellowship. Acceptance is so powerful that even unrighteous approval of sin between sinners can abide for a time on account of it; this is charity between thieves.

Most of our anxieties are rooted in the fear that we shall fall short of someone else's approval or our own. I willingly confess that my closest friends are exactly those people in whose company I am entirely free of the fear that they are measuring me. One of the unhappy circumstances of Christian life is that most of us must at some time measure others; we are required to affirm approval or disapproval. But this task is made possible to Christians by acceptance of those we measure. Have we so profoundly and inwardly accepted each neighbor, colleague or employee that when we speak, approvingly or otherwise, we neither attack his ego nor defend ours, but simply demonstrate the depth of our care for him? Disapproval based upon acceptance is a blessing; approval without acceptance has no charity. The question has its counterpart for those who feel themselves under measure. Do we so profoundly accept our employer, teacher or superior officer that no disapprobation, however deeply it may probe our sensitivities, can possibly cause a breach of charity between us? Charity is possible only to those who accept others not by their perfection but because they know themselves accepted by the charity of Christ. When all instruction and correction is ended and maturity has come, the question still stands over all of us: have we received one another as Christ has received us?

A Prayer

O GOD, we thank Thee for food and shelter and all the good things Thou dost give us. As we stop now for a moment to remember with gratitude Thy goodness, we would call to mind the hungry, the cold, the lonely and despised. Our Father, as the sessions of this convention come and go, we pray that we may have the wisdom and courage to make plans for our own lives. We thank Thee that we have been called to membership in the fellowship of Christ. As we take our place in this glorious community of the forgiven and the forgiving, we ask only that we may join with our Lord and Master in helping to bear the burden of the people in their need. We pray in his name. Amen.—*E. Fay Campbell, Secretary, Division of Higher Education, Board of Christian Education, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., at convention of Student Volunteer Movement, Athens, Ohio, January 1956.*

As for You and Your House?

Imperative Choices

By James H. Robinson

"If you be unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15.

PYTHAGORAS, the philosopher, was once asked contemptuously by a Greek tyrant what he was doing at the Olympic games. Pythagoras answered, "Some come to try out for the prizes, some come to sell their merchandise, some come to enjoy themselves and to meet their friends. I am one of those who come just to stand on the sidelines and to look on." Bacon, in telling this story much later, added these words: "But man must know that in the theater of men's lives and God's world, it is reserved only for God and the angels to look on."

There is no question that Bacon was right, for the essence of life is activity, struggle, growth, achievement and development. The only constant value that does not change is the necessity of change itself. Life must reach for the ultimate fulfillment God ordained for it. But to achieve the ultimate one must choose, for all life, good or bad, is the result of choices people make. To stand on the sidelines is in itself an unconscious choice.

Religious Basis

Life has many imperative choices which we must make, but there are many choices which we cannot make of our own will and volition. We cannot choose the circumstances of our birth. We cannot choose our parents or our brothers and sisters because circumstances of both the love of God and men, which are beyond our control, predetermine this part of our existence before our birth. However, we can choose our friends, our life partners and our associates. Every one of us has to make the choice of developing a philosophical and religious basis of life upon which we construct the answers to two most important questions. The first is, now that I have life, what will I do with it? The second is, when things d not work out as I had hoped or planned—in othe words, when trouble comes and life tumbles in— how do I rise above the circumstances?

A satisfactory answer to these two question presupposes that we have a religious basis o framework in which to construct the answers. An this too is a matter of choices, for one can choos or refuse to choose to have a religious and mora basis for his life. Man is not in this world eithe by the caprice of nature or as an accident of th mating of two human beings. Even an illegitimat child is not without purpose, meaning and impor tance to God. We often have a hard time determin ing what our purpose is, and it is often difficult t find the way to the goal of our life, but the fac remains that nothing in the divine plan of God i either wasted or without purpose. God goe through no useless motions and he never gets in "blind alley." The divine economy has a role fo every single individual. It was Thomas à Kempi who said, "No man is beyond the reach of God." God wants, indeed he needs, every one of us in hi service, but we have to choose to let him use us.

Hence, the text of this sermon comes from th 24th chapter of the stirring book of Joshua Joshua, in this passage, was telling those ancien people of God, the Israelites, that they had to make a choice, and that that choice, if it was to be suc cessful and lead to more abundant life, must be predicated upon the will of God through their lives. In giving his valedictory, he placed this im perative choice squarely before them when he said "Choose this day whom you will serve."

Attaining Abundant Life

The abundant life is not necessarily measured in terms of a modern success story whose chief ingredient is the possession of material things, or the regular advancement to a higher position. The abundant life is one of usefulness to others, to community, to nation and to God. It is stewardship of the knowledge we have gained in use to increase the sufficiency of our own as well as other's needs; it is the wise sense of direction toward a satisfying task which leads to a happy though not always an affluent existence. It is the achievement of a reverent attitude toward God and the things which really matter. It does not come by accident or chance, but by the effort which is the result of a choice.

Everyone has to choose. Everyone is called upon to choose between right and wrong, between truth and error, between good and evil, between prejudice and acceptance, between righteousness and unrighteousness. There is no middle ground here. Joshua set the example for the Israelites when he said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." No one may escape the necessity of making the choice. If we do not choose and try to let the course of life take us where it will, we do not exercise the essential function for which we were born, for we were born to be the sons of God and his agents on the earth. Life ultimately catches up with us. This is what Joshua meant when he said

ward the close of the 24th chapter, "He will turn
l do you harm." Consequences of inaction or re-
al to choose the higher goals of life are often
devastating for us as wrong action and faulty
ices.

Life has no cut-and-dried easy answers to any
its problems. One has to take a stand on one
e of the question or the other. Neutrality is not
ays either an honorable or an intelligent posi-
n. In most cases, neutrality indicates that we
vacillating indiscriminately on the one hand
that we lack courage to take a stand on the
er. Furthermore, failure to choose, failure to
nd up and be counted, always puts one on the
onger of the two contending sides, no matter
ich is the right or the wrong, the higher or the
ver. Therefore, a choice is made for us by the
ic of the situation and it may not be the choice
hich we would make under normal, moral and
asonable circumstances. If the wrong side for
e moment is the stronger, by the false neutrality
e has assumed he is supporting, at least uncon-
iously, that side. We are all familiar with the
ct that in a meeting where a vote is taken those
o abstain, unless they ask for the privilege, are
unted with the majority. Did not Jesus say, "He
o is not with me is against me"? Silence often
nds an unholy consent to the forces of evil.

Response to Environment

A continual interplay goes on between man and
s environment. We are molded by powerful
rces of all that goes on about us. To a more or
ss degree, all of us are molded and are products
our environment. None of us, however, are com-
etely limited by the environment. We are limited
y the forces about us only as we yield to them our
ill and give up the making of choice and playing
full role in life which God requires and expects
us. We have the God-given insight and the
bility to make those choices which can help to
nange the environment and remold it to our will,
nd to the will of God. Here, again, the choice is
nperative; if we do not choose, then the environ-
ment makes us something we often do not want to
e. If we choose, then we can make the environ-
ment help to make others and ourselves what God
ants us to be.

The Hungarian artist, Munkacsy, beautifully
nd graphically illustrates the reality of this idea
n his great masterpiece of the crucifixion which
angs in Wanamaker's Philadelphia store. Jesus,
who made his choice, dominates the scene as he
angs there on that cruel Roman cross. At the foot
f the cross is the sorrowing band of the faithful,
who also made their choice. They followed him to
he edge of the grave; they could go no farther.
On the left are those who chose to crucify him.
But on the right is a crowd of curious onlookers.
They are, by far, the more numerous. They said
hey were neutral, but they were not, for if they
were not for Jesus then they were against him.
They had in their hands the power to change the
ourse of history at that hour, but their dishonora-
le attempt to be neutral actually threw their
weight on the side of those who hung our Lord on
that cross.

Divine Guidance Needed

We are theists precisely because we are not atheists. An atheist is one who believes that the world operates only by natural law and that human individuals have no opportunity of sharing in the process of creativity. All progress of scientific development of the last few decades is contrary to such a naive belief. On the other hand, a theist is one who believes that men work together with God through his divine purposes for their lives to help shape and continue the process of his creativity. The religion of a theist does not guarantee him against adversity, as indeed no religion does, but it does give him the insight, the wisdom, the power, the strength and the courage by which he may decide to overcome all limiting and inhibiting circumstances.

The margin between many of life's imperative choices is often a very close and delicate one. It takes great discipline of the mind and body to make the right decision in such a narrow channel. Right choices cannot be made without the assistance of a divine guidance. The difficulty of making right choices is clearly seen by the fact that men are both rational and emotional beings. Man thinks rationally but powerful emotional forces often warp his reason.

All right decisions are a result of compounding the right proportions of reason and emotion. A man who is all reasoning is cold, detached and indifferent. Indifference is by far the worst state we can ever fall into. A man who acts solely on the basis of his emotions goes off into false avenues and pursues illusions. Reason is necessary to chart the course of our actions, to balance the decision, to sharpen the insight and weigh the evidence; but emotion is important in that it gives man a concern, a feeling, a drive and a love for God which makes the life of the world and the love of his fellow men imperative for the achievement of the best society.

This is the most intricate and difficult part of our human make-up and natural existence. We often know rationally that something is wrong, but emotionally we are impelled to keep on doing it. The Apostle Paul pointed this idea up for us when he said, "I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do." A large part of the success of our personal life is the way in which we use our emotions to inspire our reason and our reason to subjugate our emotional desires and drives, and discipline ourselves to a holy and devout life.

Accepting Oneself

First of all, we choose to accept ourselves as beings of God, whom God loves and desperately needs in his everlasting task of redemption. We must make the best of whatever ability we began life with and make that a little better. We should not waste our energy and time in resenting whatever limitations we may have and then begin to

live in the dream world of what we would do or would decide to do if we had someone else's money, talents, ability or opportunity. Nothing is so unproductive as idle speculation upon unfounded presuppositions about an impossible possibility. The first and hardest battle I ever faced in my life was to accept myself as an American Negro. Had I continued to live in a dream world of bitter resentfulness at my limitations and the circumstances of my environment, I would never have developed my own personality and would have done nothing worth-while in this world, either for those to whom I minister or to those to whom I must be an ambassador on behalf of those to whom I minister. Perhaps a personal witness can be excused in light of the fact that the best Christian witness is what Christ has done for us.

Each Has Some Talent

When Boswell, the great biographer of Samuel Johnson, went to hear William Wilberforce make a speech in London, he said, "When I saw that little bit of a man rise to speak, he looked to me for all the world like a shrimp standing on a table. But as he spoke, he grew and grew until the shrimp had grown into a whale." Boswell might have told us something else. William Wilberforce not only was a very diminutive man, but he was sick all of his life; and for twenty years he had to use a small dose of narcotics every day just to keep himself going, but he had the will to make the choice, to use just enough of the drug so that the appetite of the body would not overwhelm him and make him a narcotic addict. What tremendous power of mind over body! He accepted himself as he was and went on to do great things for God and humanity. He, more than any other single man in England, broke the slave trade. At his grave in Westminster Abbey, a one-sentence epigraph has been carved in stone: "Here lies the attorney general of the unprotected and defenseless." The possibility of such an immortality is open to each of us just for the choosing.

Whatever we have and are is of value in the kingdom of heaven. God wants it and will use it, for no man or woman on the earth is without some ability that He can use. God delights not so much in what we do as in how much we do with what he has endowed us. After all, there are many more one-talent people than ten- and five-talent people. That is why Jesus told the unforgettable story of the parable of the talents. If the one-talent people of the world would put their ability to work, the Kingdom would come.

Productive Life

Life is never fulfilled in itself for itself, but in someone else or something else to a higher end. Selfish living is destructive both to self and society. Unselfish living, giving of self, is rewarding to others and helpful to ourselves. Therefore, we must choose to develop the productive side of our life by finding some worth-while social service project like a hospital, a church or a community center, and offering it our ability in some capacity as a volunteer. Then, pour our lives into it.

Institutions live only because human beings hav chosen to be their lifeblood, and because they ar but the elongated shadow of one or more perso alities. Cut off that supply of lifeblood, and ever institution has no other choice but to perish. On of the great differences between democracy an communism is that in our society we do not hav to be urged, impelled or forced to engage the effor to help others to the more abundant life. Democ racy comes from within committed individual who choose to share together in the taking of ful responsibility for the improvement and develop ment of society. Every social service project an ticipates many urgent needs for human recon struction in which the tools of the knowledge w possess can be put to work.

There is hardly a social service project in thi nation which could keep its doors open without th voluntary service which millions of people wh choose to do so give to it. Not enough of our ables young people who have come out of college in re cent years are following in the footsteps of thei elders and continuing this excellent and much needed service to mankind. This sense of demo cratic responsibility to choose to serve one's fellow men without compensation, thereby continuing the creative process of God to make the world better, is one of the important factors which has made us a great people. One will not make any money out of such efforts, but one does receive the greatest reward of seeing his life fulfilled in someone and in something else. For most of us, the world is our great creditor. All of us owe it much. But if we choose to serve God and our fellow man, the world will be our eternal debtor.

Danger and Opportunity

Today, when two great systems of social organization and political philosophy are locked in mortal combat, we have the imperative of a great political and ideological choice before us. The whole world has to choose the one or the other for there seems to be no middle ground. Prime Minister Nehru of India may succeed in finding a middle way, but the possibility is very slight. In this hour of international crisis, instead of torturing our imagination, we should choose to be calm and dispassionate in the face of danger, and not given to the lumping fallacy or to hasty generalizations, snap judgments and quick, unsound conclusions. And at all cost we must avoid mass hysteria. We have already seen too much of the derisive spirit which tears at the soul of the republic, which was engendered by misguided though apparently sincere men who as Archibald McLeish once said, "All but wrap themselves in the American flag."

The first thing to do in a crisis is to stand still and think out the problems and the questions with which the world is beset; to know the will of God and to persistently seek his help and faithfully trust him. Then, work out a course of action, make the right choice and be willing to stand by that choice even though we must pay the supreme sacrifice for it.

There is an all too prevalent attitude in America today of feeling that we are not expendable. Every man, woman and child is expendable for the salvation of the souls of people, the building of the kingdom of God. And every citizen in this nation is expendable not only to the preservation of democracy but also to its extension, as an approach to the more ideal way of life over the whole earth.

We must never close our minds to anything, but rather choose to keep on learning. The study of new ideas begins with each new opportunity. God is ever revealing himself to us in new truths. We choose to be receptive to the voice of God. Even a crisis can be a time of spiritual learning. The Chinese define a crisis as a time of danger and opportunity. We never stop learning until the day we die; God has always something more for us to learn about his world and something more to do for his Kingdom. Surely every Christian, every group, and every church can attempt one new thing for God periodically. Life does not always say "please." It demands and sets penalties when the demands are not satisfied. As Joshua says, "He will turn and do you harm."

Ultimate Fulfillment

We must choose to keep an open mind and a responsive spirit to the teachings of religion. We owe it to ourselves and to the God who created us to develop an ever-deepening knowledge of the divine attributes and the divine imperatives of God. There are many unsolved problems, imponderable situations and aggravating conditions in this world for which we need all of the divine guidance we can obtain in order to find the solutions. For the making of celestial charts, celestial observations are necessary. Man must look up to the ultimate in order to lift the horizon of his vision, the moral tone of his life and the level of his society. But no one can make us look up beyond the boordidness of earth. We have to choose to look up. Unhappily, there are many among us who choose to keep their eyes fixed upon the ground with selfish indifference.

As the poet has written, "A little learning is a dangerous thing/Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring/There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain/And drinking largely sobers us again." Truth is God's autograph; the truth of religion is yours for the praying, the believing, and the living. In all your getting, get God's autograph in your book of life. Write his will and his way in your life and he will write your name on the pages of the book of life instead of its footnotes.

Failures or mistakes in the days ahead will not be easily retrieved, because we live in a world that moves with great rapidity, and time is not always on our side, this is all the more damaging because a golden opportunity may have been lost which may never come again. If I had to choose between an efficient employee with a closed mind and one less efficient but who was conscious to growth, change and new ideas, I would choose the latter, for he would keep up with the expanding universe. The former would shrivel to a nonentity as the world passed him by. Nothing is so powerful as a new idea which you appropriate when its time has arrived. Because we are human beings who partake of the divinity of God and his creative will, we never stop learning and growing until the day we die. The poet Longfellow in his "Psalm of Life" incisively summed the problem up for us when he wrote: "Life is real! life is earnest! And the grave is not its goal." Longfellow was alluding to the choice that God made for us all. The ultimate fulfillment here by our own will of our divine destiny, that we may be fulfilled in Him in an expanding universe which, though it is yet beyond the bounds of our vision, we believe to be entirely possible.

To those who choose the way of God, he gives a real integration of the personality and release from frustration; deliverance from the burden of an intolerable existence and opportunity to live gloriously no matter what their limitations; a genuine clue to the meaning of life; an amazing companionship, not only with people of every race and nationality who love the Lord our God, but with those before our time—the apostles, the martyrs, the prophets and the reformers; the moral strength to overcome life's perplexing problems; a satisfying task in the service of His Kingdom; and a joyful preparation for the future in the world beyond, for nothing is ever wasted in the divine economy of God.

The future here and now and beyond our earthly vision belongs to those who believe in the power of God, working through their lives for the redemption of this world, who are free from prejudiced thinking and action, who are courageous enough to take a stand, honest enough to admit mistakes and repair them in contrition, loving enough to be humble, tenacious enough to have no fear of any kind of tyranny which sets itself against the will of God, and capable of living with progress and change. The future belongs to those in the heart of God who, like Mary, have chosen the better part.

Ash Wednesday

BY the light of our dim loving, Lord,
Find us out, mark us on brow and heart
With the sign of repentance. Then we must

Surely remember and see ourselves,
See and remember that we are men
(Read: parcels of dust)—

Remember whence we came
And the slighting metaphors that define us:
Ashes, dry grass.

Mark us for dissolution of ancient sin,
So that though flesh fail us and our blood parch
within us,
Being Thine and so marked—we surpass!

SIEGMUND A. E. BETZ.

Ash Wednesday Marks the Beginning of Rewarding Spiritual Pilgrimag

Why Observe Lent?

By J. R. Brokhoff

"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written of the Son of man by the prophets will be accomplished." Luke 18:31.

THE question, "Why observe Lent?" is often asked by persons whose churches do not observe this season. If we were asked for an answer, would we be able to adequately reply? Those who are informed know that Lent is nothing new that should need explaining. It is as old as today's text; Jesus announces that he is going to Jerusalem to suffer and die. That period going toward Holy Week and Good Friday is Lent. From the very beginning of Christianity, Lent has been observed. At first the apostles put aside forty hours before Easter to prepare spiritually for Easter. Later that period was considered insufficient, and the time was lengthened to seven days before Easter, known as Holy Week. As the years went by, people felt the need of more time for spiritual preparation for Easter, and the period was lengthened to forty days. at the Council of Nicea, 325 A. D., the church officially set aside forty days for spiritual preparation by fasting and repentance. Note it was 325 A.D. and not 1325. Through the centuries, millions of Christians have found it helpful to spend forty days of Lent as necessary preparation for a meaningful Easter.

Today many of us feel the same way. Without Lent, Easter would be just another Sunday. We feel it is necessary and appropriate that we should take out time to think about the passion and death of Christ. On Ash Wednesday we begin a spiritual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. On this road we come to a sign, similar to the old railroad crossing signs. It is in the form of an "X," a St. Andrew's cross, and on it are these words: "Stop, Look, and Listen." That is the meaning of Lent; that is why we observe Lent. Let us look at the sign a little more closely.

Physical Rest, Spiritual Growth

We observe Lent, for one thing, because it causes us to stop. This is good advice for American people. We are the goingest people on earth. We are always on the go. In 1954 Americans traveled more than 18 billion miles by air, 34 billion miles by rail, and in more than 48 million cars Americans drove over 521 billion miles. In addition, 30 million Americans in 1954 moved their residences. It is high time that someone called a halt. Lent is doing just that.

Lent is saying to us, "Stop and rest awhile." Because we are rushing, hurrying, going hither and yon, we are tired and well-nigh exhausted. This mad pace is breaking us down physically and mentally. Heart attacks are common. Men and women are developing ulcers from worry and concern. Nervous breakdowns result often from having too much to do, from too much strain, too many responsibilities and too many places to go.

When we rest physically we have a chance to grow spiritually. When we are still, we begin to know that God is God. A traveler in Africa hired natives to carry his baggage. One day he was in a hurry to get from one place to the next. He asked the captain of the natives to push on. Finally the natives sat down and refused to budge. The disturbed traveler asked for the reason. The captain told him, "They say they will not go another step until their souls catch up with their bodies." We too have been rushing ahead materially and scientifically and have left our souls in the rear. It is time for a spiritual advance, and Lent is the time for it.

Time to Live

Lent says moreover, "Stop getting involved in unimportant details." We have so much to do. We are the busiest people in the world. Each man thinks nobody is any busier than he is. There are things to do and many places to go. There are club dates, social appointments, business responsibilities, home plans—and on and on and on we can go. Who has not said the same thing?

Lent asks us to think of what is really important. It suggests that God and his Cause come first. Lent is asking more of our time and effort. But here is the rub! We say we do not have time, not even an extra minute of the day. We are more than busy. How can a person find an extra hour per day for prayer and Bible reading? How is it possible to give up Wednesday nights for Lenten services? The truth is that if our lives continue as they are, there will be no time for prayer and worship. But Lent tells us to stop many of our nonessential activities, cancel unnecessary appointments, create time during the week for God and spiritual exercises. Lent is a time to stop and live. It reminds one of the little boy who, like all boys, was usually very noisy around the house. But once he became very quiet. His mother wondered what had happened to him or with what mischief he was busy. She searched for him and found him sitting on a chair, doing nothing. She asked, "Maurice, what are you doing?" and he indignantly answered, "Can't you see? I'm just livin'." When we stop what we are doing and relax,

ve begin to live. In solitude and meditation during ent, we find our life in God.

The sign on the road of the Lenten pilgrimage lso says, "Look." When we are traveling we cannot ee very well. Much of what we look at is a blur. A wife traveling with her husband often says, "Let's top and take a look." The law in some states says hat at railroad crossings a car or bus is to stop and he driver is expected to look in both directions be- ore proceeding. Lent asks us to do the same. We top and then we are to look in two directions.

Means of Finding Oneself

We look in the direction of ourselves. If we take look at and in ourselves we will deny ourselves. An honest self-investigation shows how lax and care- ess we have permitted ourselves to become. We will ee the need of self-discipline and self-denial. Fast- ng is one form of self-denial during Lent, asking us to give up something very dear to us. It is an buse of Lent to abstain from that which means ittle to us, like the girl who, not liking the piano, lecides to give up practicing during Lent; or like he man who, not caring for sweets, gives up candy. Rather, it should work the other way. Here is a man who smokes three packs of cigarettes a day and eels that he cannot possibly give up smoking. For him, to go without smoking during the forty days of Lent would be real fasting. Or there is the woman who claims she would die if she did not have her coffee. If she is so dependent upon this stimulant, he should discipline herself by abstaining from cof- ee to the glory of God.

We must remember that we do not fast in order o profit by it. We do not fast for the sake of fast- ng, either. We deny ourselves for Jesus' sake. The money saved by fasting is placed in a denial en- velope and is returned to the church on Good Fri- day, the supreme day of sacrifice. In this way we share in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. It makes Good Friday and His sacrifice a little more meaningful to us. Then on Easter, when the fast is broken, we share some of the joy and victory of the resurrection. We arise, too, as new people who have mastered self.

A Finger Points at Us

Take a look at and in yourself and repent! When we honestly look inside, we can well be ashamed. We find ourselves full of creeping and crawling things, things of evil, selfishness and meanness. We cry with St. Paul, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" Like Peter we instinctively fall down on our knees and petition, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Isaac Watts too was filled with contrition when he saw himself in the light of the Lenten cross:

> When I survey the wondrous cross
> On which the Prince of Glory died,
> My richest gain I count but loss,
> And pour contempt on all my pride.

But it is not enough to take a look inside and say n a general way, "I am a sinner." That is too easy. It is meaningless. Lent, particularly Ash Wednes- day, causes us to be boldly frank about ourselves. Are we at fault in a specific instance? Are we re- sponsible for the mess we have at home or in the office? It is so easy to sin unconsciously. David had that experience. He committed adultery with Bath- sheba and murdered her husband to cover up the evil deed. Yet he had no pangs of conscience. He went on his merry way until a prophet, Nathan, was sent by God. Nathan did not approach David di- rectly about his sin. He knew David would be able to see sin in another person even if he could not see it in himself. He thus told David about a rich man who had hundreds of sheep, but when a visitor came he took the only lamb of his tenant to feed his guest. David was so enraged that he said the rich man was worthy of death. Then Nathan pointed to him and said, "You are the man." This Lent a finger is pointing at each of us: "You are the man," you are the one who is wrong, you need to be forgiven.

Upward and Forward

Looking only at ourselves is not good. Seeing our sins and failures we can become morbid and de- spondent. There is another look—an upward and a forward look. It is a look at the cross. As we begin to observe Lent on Ash Wednesday, the cross out- side a city wall in Jerusalem is only a tiny speck on the horizon. As we walk toward Jerusalem each day of Lent, the cross gets larger. Finally, during Holy Week we stand at the foot of the cross, and the cross looms large. There we see the blood shed for our sins. There we see the price paid for our sal- vation.

A look at the cross is healing. When the children of Israel were bitten by snakes in the wilderness, Moses raised a brazen serpent on a staff and told the bitten people to look at it and they would be healed. Jesus referred to this event, and said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up." As the serpent brought healing in a look, so the cross brings peace and salvation to sick and diseased souls.

Lent causes us to focus our eyes on the cross of Christ. There we see the God-man dying for us. Abraham Lincoln's body was taken from the White House to the railroad station to be transported to its final resting place in his home state. People lined the streets to watch the procession. Many of them were Negroes. One Negro woman held up her little son so he could see above the people's shoulders and heads. As she did, she said, "Take a good look, honey, for he died for you." That is what we do during Lent: we look at the cross and see on it a man who died for us.

The sign of our Lenten pilgrimage says, "Listen." Our world is one of noise. We are ever talking and gossiping. Radio and television blare from morning until bedtime. Horns honk, tires screech, motors roar, machines hum. Noise, noise, noise! In a world like this, Lent says, "Get quiet to listen." We can- not listen unless there is quiet. "Be still and know that I am God."

The world is beginning to realize that silence for listening is golden. Creative work cannot be done except in solitude which makes listening possible.

Walter Lippmann works each morning in a soundproof office in his home. He spends the hours from 8 to 12 there every day, and does not permit anyone or anything to disturb him. If he did not thus close himself up in silence, he would not be a man who influences the minds of millions through his newspaper column. He must listen to God, to truth, to the movements of the world.

Management also is learning that listening is vital to good work. A mayor of a midwest city ordered that all department heads shall, upon reporting at 8 A. M., spend 20 minutes in silence. During that period they listen for God's guidance, think through their problems, and plan for the day. The rest of the day depends upon that listening period.

'Be Still and Know'

The principle holds true in the religious field. We must either listen to God or die. A pastor and his wife once heard their small son breathing heavily. They went to his room and found him gasping for breath. They called their physician. He asked that the child be brought to the phone. He said that the child's larynx was closing and that a tube would have to be inserted at once. Because he was so far away, he suggested they call a doctor in their neighborhood. The pastor began to dial one doctor after another, but could not reach one. As the breathing became more difficult, the pastor became more frantic and frenzied. At last in exhaustion he put down the receiver and began to pray. Then the phone rang. It was his doctor to explain he was trying to call, but the line was always busy. He knew of a refugee doctor in the pastor's neighborhood, he said. The refugee doctor came and the child lived.

As long as the pastor was trying to talk, his physician could not get to him with a vital message. When we talk and talk and take things into our own hands, God is helpless though he wants so very much to help us. Like the pastor, we need to relax, rest and listen. This means prayer, meditation and worship. God will then speak to us—no, perhaps not in words of English or in an audible voice. Nevertheless, he will speak to us in a way that we will know his guidance and comfort.

To those who are listening and are troubled, God says, "My grace is sufficient for you." To those needing comfort, Christ says, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live." To those facing temptation, God says, "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Shall we have time to listen this Lent? Is a daily hour too much time to give? Can Wednesday nights be spent for Lenten services when other things need to be done? If during this coming Lent we begin to feel that way, let us remember that Jesus said to the sleeping disciples in the garden of Gethsemane: "So, could you not watch with me one hour?" There is rebuke in those words.

Listen to God or die! The old signs at railroad crossings, "Stop, Look and Listen," are not heeded today. Yet now and then we hear of a train plowing into a car at a crossing. It brought destruction and death to the occupants of the car. Listen to God's Word or doom and death will be the sure outcome. The observance of Lent is thus an essential of the spiritual life.

'Let Us Also Go'

Jesus did not go to Jerusalem alone. The text says, "Behold, *we* are going up to Jerusalem." Not "*I* am going," but, "*We*." Jesus took his disciples with him to share his passion and death. Jesus does not want to go up by himself to Jerusalem again this year. He wants his modern disciples to go with him. He wants all of us to observe Lent and take this spiritual pilgrimage. Shall we go? Shall we observe Lent? When Jesus at another time told his friends he was going to Jerusalem, Philip turned to his associates and said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." In our day true followers of Jesus will say the same: "Let us also go to Jerusalem, that we may die with him."

A Pastoral Prayer

By Harry E. Philo

Congregational Church, Highland Park, Michigan

MAY Thy Spirit be upon this congregation, O God, for Thou hast anointed all of us to teach the good tidings; to bind up the brokenhearted; to proclaim liberty to those held captive by sin; to comfort all that mourn, giving them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy in place of mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that friend and neighbor, loved one and stranger, may become as trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord.

May Thy Spirit be upon us, O God, even as it was upon Thy Son. And when we are called upon to spend time in the secret wrestlings of prayer—seeking forgiveness for our pride, if that be our sin; or mercy for the wrong we have committed, with or without intention, if that be our deep regret; or failing in some way to love and live and lift—grant that on the wings of prayer we may find the clear, cool, cleansing stream of righteousness, absolving us of all guilt, so that we can go out in peace and be led forth in joy.

May Thy Spirit be upon all those whom we love, and with those whom we ought to love. May the sick and the afflicted receive the balm of healing for spirit and body. May they be led gently and lovingly to the wellsprings of joy, peace and health. May Thy Spirit be upon the lonely, the frightened, the friendless, and those who are despised and forsaken. Be to them a shield and a defender, a refuge and a strength.

May Thy Spirit lead us into a stronger faith and into greater areas of service, reminding us that man's extreme necessity is God's opportunity, and ours also, that we may do the will of Him who loved us and gave his life for us. In his name, we pray. Amen.

Guiding Principles for Christians When They Meet Temptation

Jesus and Our Choices

By Owen Hutchison

Matthew 4:1-11.

JESUS discovered, even as we do, that making decisions is hard work. The story of his temptations, as recorded in the fourth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, has been told in language that gives the impression, at least to some, that it was a kind of sham battle be fought, not quite real. The word "temptation" is misleading, in a sense, because it suggests a clear-cut choice between good and evil, with the colors of each clearly seen. I suspect that we have looked at the story too long through the eyes of adoring worshipers. It might be instructive to try to see it now through the eyes of Jesus himself.

First of all, notice that in each instance the issue was finally settled on the basis of Jesus' own answer to the question, "Who am I?"

The basic issue before him was this: How will the Son of God act? What methods would be appropriate for the Son of God to use in his ministry on earth? Should he use the supernatural power at his disposal to batter down men's resisting wills and make short work of the opposition, or should he follow the method of persuasion, example, loving patience, and finally pay the supreme price of sacrificial love on the cross?

The Son of God

Sheer physical hunger forced the first showdown. The tempter put it this way: "If you are the Son of God"—planting a subtle doubt about his identity, you see—"*if* you are the Son of God—if *you* are the Son of God—if you *are* the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." He could do it, too, if he *were* the Son of God—and how his body, many days without food, cried out for bread! But would the Son of God place his life and ministry on the level of physical need alone? The answer was as if Jesus had said to himself: "Remember, you *are* the Son of God. It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

The complexity of his task, magnified by the spiritual indifference of the multitudes, forced the second showdown. If he were the Son of God, would it not be perfectly proper to "bowl them over"—to use our slang expression—by a sensational demonstration of power, and let them know immediately who he was? How about jumping off the pinnacle of the temple and defying the law of gravity? That would make them sit up and take notice! The Scriptures say: "He will give his angels charge of you," and, "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone." The decision, once again, hinges partly on his knowledge of who he was. It would be unworthy and wrong for the Son of God to "pull a cheap publicity stunt," as we would say. He will not tempt God like that!

Here is a guiding principle for each of us as we struggle in our own valleys of decision. Who do you think you are? Certainly not God's Son, in the sense that Jesus was, but just as certainly you are God's child—for Jesus told you so. What kind of a choice would a child of God make in your situation?

Halford Luccock tells an amusing anecdote of something that happened to him on a train. He was traveling in a Pullman, and the porter, discussing his reservation with the conductor, referred to him three times as "this space." He said, "This space got on at Norfolk." "This space is going to New York." "This space came in from the other car." And the traveler thought, with a shocked surprise, "That's what I am to the Pullman company—'this space.' "

Each of us reveals what he thinks of himself by the choices he makes. If you accept the Pullman company's estimate—if all you are, in your own mind, is a body that occupies space—then you will make your decisions on that level. You will be incapable of sacrificing the appetite of the moment for the victory of the year. If you were hungry and could turn stones into bread, though to do so would throw a shadow over your future, you would turn the stones into bread and there would not even be a debate in your mind.

But suppose you are a child of God! What gives life its meaning, more than space, is relationship. Consider the small radio beside your bed. It occupies a bit of space—perhaps a foot long and eight inches wide—yet its relationship enables it to pick up Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and plant the music in your mind. So our relationship to God is the glory of life. But when you realize that, it changes your choices, for it is written: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Evil Unmasked

Observe, in the second place, the way Jesus saw through the disguises of evil. He refused to be fooled by plausible arguments and noble appearances.

It is necessary for us to do some reading between the lines to get the full impact of this story. In the narrative the evil alternative is identified in personal

terms, thus: "The tempter came and said to him . . . Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple . . . Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain . . . Then Jesus said to him, 'Begone, Satan!' . . . Then the devil left him."

Remember, the story is a sort of "flash back" of the spiritual struggle in the wilderness. In retrospect Jesus could see the evil alternative clearly enough to call it "the devil" and picture it as objectively as though the devil were a person. But if you could have seen into Jesus' mind as he sat alone among the rocks, cold and hungry and mentally tormented by indecision, you would not have seen the issues as clear-cut good or evil. The devil would not have appeared to you as a devilish person, but as a good friend trying to persuade you to a course of action that looked perfectly reasonable and worthy.

Look at the so-called "temptations." They would not have been temptations if they had shown their true colors. It is the nature of evil to disguise itself so that it looks good and so becomes a trap into which the careless person falls. Consider the temptation to turn stones into bread. It was not only Jesus' own physical hunger that was involved, it was also the method of his ministry. Now he knew what it felt like to be hungry. He had seen little children in Galilee wasted and sick from malnutrition. He had seen old women lying by the roadside, crying out for bread. Starvation was a common thing in his day, and his great heart was wrung with compassion. What better way could he save men's souls than by becoming a social reformer and abolishing poverty and starvation?

Does that look evil? No. It is only seen to be evil when placed against the real need of the human soul. Dr. George Buttrick, in the *Interpreter's Bible*, says: "Man does live by bread, and economic righteousness is a Christian concern; but *man does not live by bread alone*. . . . He lives in God, and the circumference of life cannot be rightly drawn until the Center is set." Jesus looked keenly and closely at the issue until he saw through its disguise.

Guiding Principle for Christians

Again, in the third temptation, the view from the high mountain was glorious. "All the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them"—how Jesus yearned for them, not for himself, but as a shepherd yearns over his flock, as a father yearns over his children. John Knox, the great Scottish reformer, cried out, "O God, give me Scotland, or I die!" He wanted Scotland, not for himself, but for God. So Jesus wanted the nations for God. Imagine a dictator like Jesus! Imagine Jesus as the military hero, the man on horseback, the man whose political power is so great that his every word is enforced by all the power of the state. If there have to be dictators, why could not Jesus be one! Who else would be as worthy, as kindly, as generous and benevolent and just?

What a wonderful dictator the Son of God would have made! Only then he would not have been any longer the Son of God, for the devil has his price. You can have the nations, if you will use the devil's means to achieve your ends. Stalin has proved that War is always fought for good purposes, at least on our own side. Universal Military Training is for national defense. Sell out your freedom and buy your security. "All these will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

We should be everlastingly grateful that Jesus saw through the clever disguise of the devil, recognized the evil for what it was, pulled off its mask and called it by name. "Begone, Satan!" He would not use the devil's means to achieve the purposes of God. "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.' " You shall accomplish God's purposes only by the use of God's methods!

Here, then, is the second guiding principle by which a Christian makes his choices. He looks long and hard at an issue before he makes up his mind, for beneath a noble motive, a lovely altruistic ideal, there may be hidden a booby trap of evil. Especially suspect, in every realm, is the suggestion that a good purpose justifies an evil method.

Armed with the Word

How are we to detect the booby trap beneath the beautiful exterior, the smooth language, the plausible argument? The question leads us, finally, to examine the strategy by which Jesus won his spiritual victories.

Imagine him there in the desert, the great silence enfolding him, the cold of the desert night penetrating to his bones, the struggle in his mind so intense that food is forgotten until suddenly he is ill from hunger and exposure. Probably you and I will never have to fight our battles in such circumstances, although perhaps we shall pace the floor at night or cry out for help to the stars. At any rate, physically he had almost reached the point of exhaustion. One wonders how he could endure the struggle longer. How did he do it? By reaching into his storehouse of memory and calling to the aid of his will the precise Scripture verses that would throw light on the issue and show it up for what it was. In order to do that, he had to know his Bible.

It is said that Martin Luther, as he sat in his study in the Wartburg Castle and fought his spiritual battles, once thought he saw the devil and threw an ink bottle at his head. Christ threw the holy Scriptures at the devil, there in the desert, and so taught us how we can win our victories.

"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' " Look at life through the lens of that Scripture and many things come out in their true colors, all the way from the bureaucratic welfare state to atheistic communism. Decide a vocation with that in your mind and very likely you will do God's will.

"Again it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.' " How many young men and women, starting out with good intentions and bright dreams, would be saved from heartbreak and tragedy and would see the fulfillment of their dreams if they only remembered this Scripture and

uit tempting God—if they only realized that while hey can choose to ignore God, they cannot choose he consequences!

"It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your od and him only shall you serve.' " How many dis-strous mistakes would be avoided, how many brave nd noble decisions would be made, if in the regular orship of God in the church we should all lay our hoices in loving dedication on the altar and say, s Christ Jesus said, "Not my will, but thine, be one!"

Here then are three guiding principles by which Christ faced the hardest decisions of his life and won his victories. First, he remembered who he was —the Son of God—and saw to it that every choice of action and attitude would be "in character." Second, he looked at the alternative until he saw through its disguise of evil, tore off the mask, and called it by its name. And third, he armed himself with the Word of God and met the evil choice with the only weapon that can finally defeat it—the holy Scriptures.

For every man, at every crossroads, let this be the approach for decision.

Tillich for TV

IN one of NBC Television's conversations with "elder wise men," Dr. Paul Tillich sounded a note of hope and courage.

"The American younger generation," he said, went into the Second World War and came out of t, and the world looked darker than before in this East-West split. As I sometimes say, the world was chizophrenic, which is a kind of mental disease in ndividuals. And I had the feeling mankind as a vhole had this disease.

"I wanted to give an answer to the growing anx-ety which developed also in this country. The an-swer was courage, but a very special kind of courage, of course, which I tried to develop there (in a book, *The Courage to Be*). Not the courage of the soldier, but the courage of the human being who feels all the riddles and all the meaninglessness of life and who nevertheless is able to say Yes to life.

"There is one concern I believe every human be-ng has: namely, the concern about what his life as a whole does mean. And that's what I call 'ultimate concern.'

"I believe 'faith'—that word—should be defined as a state of being ultimately concerned.

* * *

"When I am asked, 'Tell me a truly Protestant picture of today,' I say, 'Go to see Picasso's "Guer-nica" picture, because there you see the world in pieces and that's the one side which Protestantism always emphasizes and must emphasize. It's not the vhole of Protestantism, but it is the one side. And vhat is nearest to our present mind is just this side.

* * *

"In some church traditions the religious symbols nd the doctrinal form in which they are given—in nstruction of children and in preaching and every-vhere—are supposed to be the immovable divine evelation which simply has to be taken as it is. This, of course, is mostly expressed in the Roman Catholic Church, where we have statements which re called . . . 'faith,' which everybody has to accept, nd where no theologian is allowed to deviate or to hange what is given in the official doctrine of the church. Now, as a Protestant theologian, I cannot accept that method. I have a very high evaluation of the tradition, as you know. Some people call me much too conservative, but nevertheless I never could feel [such statements require me] to be bound to them as eternal truth. They are human expressions of the eternal but they are not eternal themselves. And that's what I call the Protestant principle. Nothing that human beings do, not even [anything that] the Protestant churches do, not even [anything that] the Bible does, is in itself eternal. Eternal, I would say as a theologian, is God alone.

* * *

"In the moment in which you say that faith is being 'ultimately concerned' and that the religious expressions are symbols, then there is no interference of science with religion and of religion with science. They are in two different dimensions.

* * *

"When I came to this country (in 1933), Europe was full of anxiety feeling, of meaninglessness. And all this exploded finally in the Hitler revolution and in communism in the Second World War. When I came to this country, very little of this was noticeable [in America]. You simply couldn't find much of it. I, of course, gave in my lectures some of the material I had learned and studied and researched in Europe. But in the first years there was very little reply to all this. They [Americans] couldn't really find what I was talking about because they hadn't experienced these things.

"Now slowly the situation changed in the late 30s, in the Second World War, and especially during the cold war after the Second World War. Something of that anxiety which we had in Europe before became visible also in this country. And I noticed it very much in my lectures and . . . in the colleges, and wherever I spoke in the last—especially the last five—years about the different forms of anxiety. . . . Then there was a tremendous response in all these younger people and in many of the older [ones], too —but especially in the younger people."

'Let Both Grow Together'

By. F. W. Schroeder

"Let both grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn." Matthew 13:30.

THE restraining order of the householder, allowing weeds and wheat to grow together, would seem to be as contrary to good farming as it is to true religion. When weeds are permitted to grow undisturbed by cultivation they soon take over. Even an amateur gardener knows this to be true. And wickedness that is not checked soon becomes bold and brazen, often to the extent of frightening the forces of decency and righteousness into meek submission. Society must always be on guard to keep the forces of evil at least within manageable bounds; better yet, to nip them in the bud. Laws and law-enforcement agencies have to be strong lest the underworld of iniquity take over and make all orderly pursuits next to impossible. It would seem therefore that the command to let both weeds and wheat grow together is not very realistic. But perhaps we had better take another look.

I

Isn't it true, for instance, that the destruction of evil—whether weeds or wickedness—is a difficult matter? When seedlings first push their tender leaves through the earth, it is next to impossible to pull out weeds without uprooting good plants as well. Some of us may also have had discouraging experiences with weed killers that are supposed to kill only broad-leaved plants without harming blades of grass. Much to our sorrow we noted that the grass withered with the weeds. This has its counterpart on the human level. Consider, for instance, the eradication of a subversive force such as communism. Our government might have adopted the now discredited McCarthy technique. But if such unscrupulous and irresponsible methods had been adopted, all human rights and civil liberties would have been destroyed as well. Nothing is gained by destroying one form of totalitarianism if in the process another is enthroned. Or consider what might well have happened if, in the endeavor to arrest the spread of imperialistic communism, the Western world had unleashed the deadly, devastating destructiveness of the A- or H-bomb. In so doing, we might well have destroyed ourselves. Increasingly, the wisdom of coexistence, however exasperating at times, has become apparent.

The destruction of evil is not only difficult, it is also delicate—delicate in the sense that it calls for greater understanding than we command. To distinguish between weeds and wheat in the early stages of growth is not easy. Some weeds look very much like wheat. And who can always distinguish unerringly between good and evil? To be sure, there are some things that are unmistakably wicked; also some that are most certainly good. When a man without provocation deliberately takes another man's life, we can unequivocally call it a wicked deed. And when friends and neighbors come together to harvest the crop of a farmer who has been laid low with an accident or affliction, we can be sure that theirs is a good deed. But the lines are not always as sharply drawn. Some wicked things appear to be good. Wolves masquerade in sheep's clothing. Between black and white there are various shades of gray. Virtues and vices intermingle. And there are virtues which, when pushed a little too far, become vices. Thrift easily becomes penuriousness, patience degenerates into complacency, and zeal leads to intolerance and bigotry. Since the recognition of evil must necessarily precede the eradication of evil, it becomes obvious that we are confronted here with a delicate matter.

II

Even within the fellowship of the Christian community it is difficult to draw hard and fast lines. Or are we to assume that everyone within the fellowship is a saint and everyone on the outside a sinner? Hardly! Even within the inner circle of Jesus' followers questionable attitudes come to light. Weeds of duplicity, if not disloyalty, grow among the wheat of professed discipleship. Perhaps the parable was provoked by some kind of double-dealing like that of Ananias and Sapphira, who, years later, sought to protect their economic security by putting only a part of their substance in the common fund while pretending that they had surrendered everything they owned. Or did the disciples perhaps anticipate the treachery that one of the inner circle of twelve was to perpetrate some months hence? On that score we can only hazard a guess, but this we know to be a fact: that over the centuries there have always been those who, though being in the church, were not really of the church.

ally the church is a unique community. The Testament speaks of it as "a chosen race, a priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people." would seem to make the church unique to the of being exclusive. No credit is due the church its corporate life reflects the selfishness and lness associated with some distinctly secular izations. Neither can the church take pride in ct that its members are difficult to distinguish people who disavow all religious precepts and ples. At the same time the church needs to be ard that it does not permit its exclusiveness to o a withdrawal from the world in some form of cism or otherworldliness that seeks to escape mination, or, even worse, adopts a Pharisa- hat makes itself obnoxious by its pretensions hteousness.

a matter of fact, the church is obligated to be ive even while it seeks to preserve its unique- For is it not the Body of him who by precept example enjoined his followers to seek and to the lost? Jesus dined with publicans and sin- He invited one of these publicans—a certain ollector by the name of Matthew—to become ciple. In one of his parables he spoke of a king commanded his servants to go out on the ts and lanes of the city to bring in the poor, maimed, the blind and lame to the banquet. e is no indication that these guests were first cted to tests of orthodoxy or standards of hiness. If this parable about the weeds among wheat, together with its companion piece, the ble of the dragnet, speaks to the church at all this: The church is not a community of saints of touch with the world, but a fellowship of re- ed sinners seeking to extend the area of re- ption. As a matter of fact, these sinners are selves in various stages of being redeemed. Oc- nally some may fall from grace, some will be weary, others will be troubled by doubts. e, we may be sure, will be without spot or wrin- Even within the church, the strong and the , the good and the bad grow together.

III

st this word of Jesus become a counsel of com- ency that fails to distinguish between right and g, good and evil, truth and falsehood—or a sel of despair that can see no ultimate triumph he kingdom of heaven—it is good to keep in l that weeds and wheat are to grow together "until the harvest." The Lord of life and his- is not unaware of evil; neither is he indifferent rd it, nor helpless in dealing with it. He will the last word. The dark line in God's face has been obliterated. We may not even presume to hat in the final consummation all will be saved. New Testament does not go beyond saying that e is a final day of reckoning.

it to wait for the harvest is not always easy. calls for patience. The servants of the parable ed to get at the weeds the moment they saw . So we would like to see the destruction of evil e about here and now without delay: not neces-

sarily all evil, but certainly those conditions, attitudes and practices that are evil from our perspective. I suspect we are not inclined to be too ruthless with the evil which is congenial to our manner of life and work. Few of us are prepared to undergo major surgery, such as plucking out a lustful eye or cutting off an offending hand. But the evil that we see in others is different. Should some crime or condition really shock us or arouse our indignation—which does not happen very often—we are tempted to do violence to the evildoer in order to destroy the evil deed. How our patience has been tried almost to the breaking point in recent years in our dealings with the iron curtain countries! We have every reason to be grateful that the patience exercised by our chosen leaders prevailed over those who would have taken the sword if they could have had things their way. To let both grow together until the harvest calls for patience—sometimes more than we command.

Along with patience we also have need of poise. Don't lose heart or hope, Jesus seems to be saying to us in these words of the parable. The final outcome will be all right. Weeds and wheat grow together only until the harvest.

> Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceedingly small;
> Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all.

Sometimes the mills of God do not grind so slowly at that. The prosperity of the wicked is, on the whole, short-lived. The tyrants of history usually enjoy only a few brief years of pomp and power. When "the kings of the earth set themselves . . . against the Lord and his anointed," it is good to remember what the Psalmist said: "He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord has them in derision." His is the final word. To become frightened and frantic the moment we see truth on the scaffold and wrong on the throne is to surrender our faith. This is not the final order in our Father's world. "Though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet." Weeds and wheat grow together only until the harvest. This is a faith for difficult times.

Obviously Jesus did not attempt to spell out in this parable a complete strategy for dealing with evil. No indication is given as to what measures are necessary and just to keep the forces of iniquity within bounds. However, this is clear: Children of the light are expected to distinguish between right and wrong. And while there are limits to what they can do about it, they need not lose heart or hope. At harvest time the weeds will be burned and the wheat will be stored.

Prayer at Table

Will Christ Rise Again?

By E. L. Allen

"Unbind him, and let him go." John 11:44.

THE raising of Lazarus was perhaps intended by the evangelist as a parable; it is probably best read by us as such. So interpreting it, we do not distort it; we penetrate to its deepest meaning. For Christ is not only the voice that bids the grave yield up its dead; he it is who lies there hidden and buried. Christ is the light that lightens every man at his coming into the world; that light often burns dim, it is sometimes quenched, but it can always be rekindled. How often John had been a witness of the resurrection of the soul, as in one or another of the Mediterranean cities men passed out of death into life at the summons of Christ. The words, "Unbind him, and let him go!" need to be spoken again today, when Christ lies buried in the world, in the church, and in ourselves.

He lies buried *in the church*. One of the features of our time is that men are attracted, even fascinated, by Christ, but they suspect that the church is keeping him from them. A modern version of the Gospels can be relied upon to prove a best seller; let three of them be published at the same time and the market will absorb them all. Graves and Podro's *Nazarene Gospel Restored* is evidence of a readiness to receive the most fantastic reconstruction of Christian origins, however exorbitant the price. The reader of such a book hopes that it will enable him to get behind the church's dogma to the truth, that it will give him the real Christ and not the traditional one.

Theological Constraint

Of course there is much to criticize in such an attitude. Without the church we should have known nothing of Christ. It is under her guardianship that the Gospels have been preserved to this day. And yet there is always the fear that she has preserved Christ by embalming him and laying him in some tidy grave of form and ceremony, with the stone of ecclesiastical authority rolled to the door. We recall Dostoievsky's vision of the Grand Inquisitor who found Christ too dangerous and so kept him from

do so was much easier than yielding him the obedience of their hearts. There is the awful possibility that those who have prophesied by his name and by his name done many mighty works will be disowned by him in the end, because they have not done the Father's will. The church should agonize continually lest she allow her loyalties and her theology to become the gravecloths in which the Lord lies bound hand and foot. Every preacher should be vigilant lest he substitute a Christ of his own making for the actual Christ. His task is to unbind him and let him go.

Ties of Conformity

Then, Christ is buried *in the world*. We used to think that our denominational divisions were the most serious ones: it now appears that the national ones do even more damage. Is it not tragic that so often, in almost any country, when the leaders of the church speak they have no more to say than their governments have said already? The communists do not listen to our pronouncements, because they do not believe we are expressing a Christian judgment; we are supporting our side in the political struggle, that is all. The main reason why missionaries have been expelled from China is that they are regarded as agents of their own countries, distinguished from other agents simply by the peculiar way in which they try to disguise the fact.

Among ourselves, the Christian who earns a top-level income tends to think as all others at that level do, and so at each stage down the scale. Of course, there are the cases in which a man endorses the point of view of just that stratum of society to which he does *not* belong; but he is often equally unfree in so doing. Our standard of living, our pattern of expenditure, the district and the style of house in which we live, all show the mark of social convention rather than that of distinctively Christian allegiance. I am not blaming others more than myself. To the searching question: "What do *you* do more than others?" the only honest answer is: "Nothing."

Yet few needs of our mass-society are more urgent than that there should be men and women who refuse to conform to the accepted pattern simply because it is accepted, and who can bring to bear on everything an individual judgment. They will resist the worship of the great goddess Production,

ho sets her slaves to turn out an ever-increasing uantity of goods that most of us can quite well do ithout. They will be clear-sighted enough to look eyond the exigencies of the nation to the purposes God's Kingdom. They will loose Christ and let m go, so that he will no longer be bound hand and ot by convention, but will set new powers to break to our time.

Bound by Our Fears

Then, finally, Christ lies buried *within ourselves.* here today is the strength and solidity of the urch to be found? Is it not in those good folk who ring to her the accumulated loyalties of successive nerations? As far as they can go back, the family as given of its best to the church, and now it is ringing up the next generation to carry on the tradition. Yet perhaps the weakness of the church is lso here. Have not these families sometimes developed a domesticated Christianity, one that is correct and cautious, but out of which the passion has one, in which the fires burn low? There are moments when we who are such aspire to something orthier, then we draw back. We are afraid, and hrist remains forever bound in the gravecloths of ur fear.

Among those whose commitment is not Christian are men who put us to shame, who summon us to a bolder, more courageous attitude. We read the story of the ascent of Everest and in the company of those gallant men we become aware of heights of the spirit that are waiting for us to climb. Book after book today reveals to us the amazing capacities of human nature, how it can cut a way through impenetrable jungle and stand triumphant on peaks hitherto reckoned insurmountable. Christ acknowledges as his own the spirit that is in these men. For he is the living Christ who appeals to the heroic in every one of us, not the dead Christ who is always calculable and only for those who want to be safe.

So Christ lies buried in the world, the church and ourselves. How can we carry him to others when he is imprisoned, impotent, dead for us? It is for us to roll back the stone, stoop down, loose the bonds and set him free.

We have kept Christ buried so long, fearing lest he should disturb the even tenor of our way. But now we will give him his opportunity and risk the revolution he may bring. If we fear what he will do, let us dismiss that fear, for he is not a stranger who comes to us. His dwelling is within, where he is the life of our life, and the fulfillment of our true selves.

A Prayer for Lent

By Herbert Beecher Hudnut

Woodward Avenue Presbyterian Church

Detroit, Michigan

O THOU who hast made us for Thyself, whose Son has taught us the high reaches of prayer, nd whose love restricts our willfulness and forgives ur sinfulness when we are penitent, we turn to hee in the quiet of the sanctuary for the benedicion of Thy presence.

> Breathe on us, Breath of God,
> Fill us with life anew,
> That we may love what Thou dost love,
> And do what Thou wouldst do.

Take from our minds the strain and stress of ese days which are trembling between good and vil. Let the ordered and beautiful peace of Thy earness flood our souls. Restore unto us the joy f Thy salvation. Make us wholly Thine, united nd held together by the sacred bonds of the Christian family.

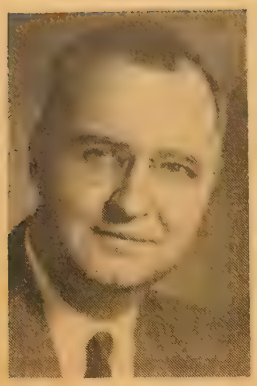
Answer, we pray Thee, the separate prayers which re the burdens we bring to this hour of worship. ift the burden, relieve the tension and assure us of ne unfailing resources in Thy providence.

Teach us that no one escapes from Thee, that no ne is ever uncared for or alone, that no one is afflicted with suffering which he cannot bear, and that God encompasses the whole wide earth and all that are within in his holy arms.

We pray that Thou wilt instruct us in the heavenly mysteries, that our doubts may be resolved, that the dark places may be lightened and the rough places smoothed in our pilgrimage.

We pray that Thou wilt bring us closer to some of the eternal verities of the passion story: our Lord's determination to go to Jerusalem, counting the cost, his loneliness in a friendless and cruel city; his deliberate choice of the way of the cross; his final disposition of prayer: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt," and his commitment of heart, body, mind and soul to God: "Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit."

And we pray that Thou wilt increase in us the longing to grow in grace and truth, to be more and more like the blessed Son of God, to gain some of his courage and compassion, to face life's crises as he did and to go about dying with his certainty of the sustaining power and the steady love of God. Amen.



What the Old Testament Means to Me

By Kendrick Strong

UPON seeing an unused Bible lying around his home, a small boy asked his mother whose book it was. "It is God's Book," she replied. "Well," replied the boy, "don't you think we should return it? Nobody around here ever seems to read it!" Because this comes home to each of us, let us think together about the most-purchased and least-read book in the world, the Holy Bible. Particularly do I want to share with you my thoughts about the Old Testament, which Christians and Jews hold in common trust and affection.

A man once said to me, "What's the value of the Old Testament? It's been out of date for a long time." This conversation set me to examining my own beliefs about the Old Testament. Is it passé? Am I wasting my time in reading it? Can we relegate it to libraries and museums where historians and anthropologists alone will disturb its slumbers? Are the devotional passages I use in the sickroom and the house of mourning only empty phrases? Are the sermons I draw from its pages a misuse of my congregation's time?

I like to remember what George Bernard Shaw wrote in his unpredictible fashion. "A good deal of the Bible," he said, "is much more alive than this morning's papers and last night's parliamentary debate. Its chronicles are better reading than most of our fashionable histories, and less intentionally mendacious. In revolutionary invective and utopian aspiration it cuts the ground from under the feet of Ruskin, Carlyle and Karl Marx; and in epics of great leadership and great rascals, it makes Homer seem superficial and Shakespeare unbalanced." Now inasmuch as this is the way I feel about the Old Testament also, I want to tell you specifically what it means to me.

Unique Revelation

I regard the Old Testament as being the *record of a unique revelation of God.* Through it God has spoken and still speaks his will for all mankind. I say "unique" advisedly, for although other religions have their ancient sacred scriptures, only the Old Testament has unfolded in progressive revelation, through the years before Jesus, the essential truths about the holiness and loving kindness of God. I am confident that the Lord spoke to other peoples of ancient times in the effort to lead them into a knowledge of the divine intention; but they must not have been as ready to receive it as were the Hebrew peoples, for they garbled the message badly.

The knowledge of one God, Creator of heaven and earth, Sovereign over all his creatures, yet stooping in love to the least of men that they might learn to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with him—here is a revelation one can find only in the pages of the Old Testament. It is a miracle akin to that of a pure white water lily forcing its way upward through the muck and mire of a swamp. In order to carry forward his long-range plans for us, God used a spiritually sensitive people, slowly unfolding through them his holy intentions. The Old Testament is the remarkable day-by-day Journal, as it were, which they kept of that spiritual adventure, a living witness to the power of God in history.

Great Personalities

The Old Testament is also a *wonderful storehouse of great personalities* who have been illuminated by that growing light. What absorbing biographies it holds of men and women who learned to walk in the light they possessed, however flickering or small.

Take Abraham, for example, a pioneer in spiritual adventuring. In a sense, the light first shone upon him, and he did not always know what it was or understand what was required of him. How much depended upon him during those tender beginnings of the knowledge of the Lord! How innocently he might have misinterpreted his experiences and led those who followed down some curious, twisting bypath. Yet in that untutored nomad was an amazing sensitivity toward spiritual things that God saw and used.

Or Moses, whose peculiar genius was expressed in uniting and solidifying the scattered bits of individual revelation into both a social structure and a religious system. He put the whole growing experience of his people on solid footing, tying God and man together into a covenant so firm that every Jewish temple over the world today is founded unshakingly upon it.

Or Micaiah, a little-sung prophet of the Most High who lived in the pre-dawn period before the great prophets—a man whose loyalty to the will of God was so absolute that he chose life imprisonment in preference to altering that will to conform to the selfish desires of men. Or Elijah, mercurial

How does a great preacher go about his sermon building?

ROBERT J. McCRACKEN

Senior Minister, Riverside, Church, New York City,
author of QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK

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servant of the Lord who shouted sarcastically to the 850 false prophets cavorting before their sacrifice.

I think of David, whose biographers offer wonderful insights into a personality in which the spirit of God wrestled mightily. Upon how many different facets of his character does the light flash! David the young man who refuses to take revenge when opportunity comes, but instead cuts off a part of Saul's robe. David the bereaved friend who cries out sadly for the slain Jonathan. Or David the hardy warrior who exclaims with nostalgic longing, "O that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!" and who, when three men of valor break through the cordon of the enemy and bring him water, pours it out as a sacrifice unto the Lord. Or David the oriental despot who, having passionately desired a woman enough to slay her husband, cries out in remorseful anguish: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love." Or David the monarch who suddenly recognizes how much more glory he has bestowed upon himself than upon the Lord, and who therefore exclaims in contrition: "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent."

Devotional Literature

The Old Testament stands with the New Testament as the *world's most magnificent treasure house of devotional literature.* No other writings of the ancient world have lifted as many souls into the presence of the Almighty.

Think of the high and holy words of praise that have tumbled forth from men's hearts as they have contemplated the power and mystery of God—the Sanctus of Isaiah: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory"; the challenge of Amos: "Seek the Lord . . . he who made the Pleiades and Orion, and turns deep darkness into the morning, and darkens the day into night . . . the Lord is his name"; the doxology of David: "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty."

Thus far I have purposely not mentioned the most remarkable concentration of devotional materials to be found in any literature—the collection of Psalms. Think what words such as these have meant in every generation to those beset endlessly by trouble and persecution: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" If we were to count the blessings each one of us has received through the ministrations of the Psalms, would we not find them to be more in number than the sands!

Social Conscience

I treasure the Old Testament also because of the *high quality of its social conscience.* The prophets were speaking as much to our own day as to their own. The needy are still being sold for a pair of shoes. Houses and fields are still being laid side by side until the small owner is crowded out. Still there are those who rise up early to follow strong drink, enjoying the harp and the lute, but considering not the work of the Lord. And wherever it is necessary for a man today to speak out firmly in the name of the Lord against some entrenched wickedness or social injustice, how encouraging it is to have the prophets squarely on his side!

A final indication of the way I feel about the Old Testament is this: it means a great deal to me because *many of my own religious roots are there.* No Christian person who has been raised on the Bible can deny that he has drawn essential strength from the Old Testament. Most Christians have awakened into spiritual life within the cradle of the New Testament; yet our faith has been deepened and enriched as we have explored our heritage of the Old Testament. Protestants don't usually listen very carefully when the pope speaks, but Pius XI one time claimed my whole sympathy when, in speaking for the entire Christian enterprise, he said, "Spiritually, we are Semites." My religious roots are Semitic, and this is one of the reasons why I will not tolerate anti-Semitism. It strikes at what I most cherish within my life—the roots of my religious faith. Whoever attacks the Jewish heritage and conviction today attacks me; whoever derides the Old Testament derides my faith.

Now perhaps you may wonder why I am a minister of Christ and not a rabbi! Let me tell you what I believe to be the relation between the Old and New Testaments. I think of the Old Testament as being the "father" of the New, and the New Testament as being the "daughter" of the Old. But although the "daughter" enjoyed a rich spiritual heritage, she did not remain within the ancestral hall. Just as the "father" had earlier responded to the call of spiritual pioneering through Abraham, Moses, Samuel and Isaiah, so also the "daughter," conditioned for that same kind of pioneering by her heritage, followed the further revelation of Jesus and John, of Barnabas and Paul. Even while knowing that her father grieved, she did not return home, for she had found a larger life. In Jesus, the Christian church had found one greater than Moses.

Close Relationship

There is a Hindu story about a two-headed bird that began quarreling. When one head wasn't looking, the other head dropped a bit of poison into its food which was shortly thereafter eaten. The murderous head then began chuckling quietly to itself; but after a moment the chuckling died away. For the poison went to a common stomach, and both heads died. Does not this fable suggest the intimate relationship existing between the Old and New Testament, between Judaism and Christianity? Our roots are intertwined, and we draw strength and nourishment from the same fatherly love. We are all sons of the Most High, and therefore in the deepest spiritual sense brothers one of another.

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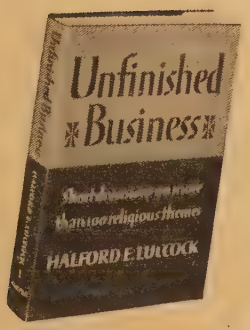

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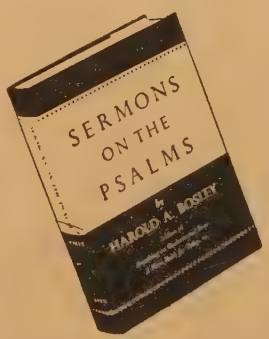

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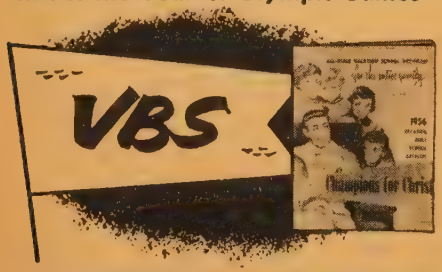

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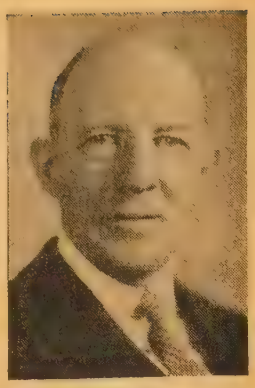

A Challenge to Christianity

By Francis B. Sayre

WE are living today in a generation more challenging, perhaps, than any since the Reformation. In the new world which we are building we are coming to realize, partly as a result of the monstrous tragedies of two World Wars, partly as a consequence of the fast-growing interdependence of nations and of peoples, that all men, whatever their background or the color of their skin, are of a single human family.

We are learning that lasting peace, with a civilization that will prove enduring, cannot be had in a world built upon exalted nationalism, imperialism and 19th century colonialism. Lasting peace can be built only upon human brotherhood.

This is what Christ was trying to make men understand 1900 years ago. It is this that constitutes the very cornerstone of Christianity. Today our postwar international experiences are beginning to turn men's minds in this same direction.

New Concept of Brotherhood

In the critical days at the close of World War II, we found it necessary to build an international organization, UNRRA, to bring help and food to the suffering people in the wake of the retreating and ravaging German and Japanese armies. One of the experiences I can never forget was our visit in 1945 to the remote mountain villages of Greece from which the people had been driven by the destroying German armies before their retreat. We watched the half-starving Greek peasants returning to their ruined villages, and saw them uplifted to a new vision of human brotherhood by UNRRA workers helping them to rebuild their ravaged homes.

One of the cardinal principles of UNRRA was that distribution of relief should depend exclusively upon human need and never upon race or nationality or creed. Only thus could we succeed in laying adequate foundations for peace. And thus came a recognition of the infinite worth of each human personality.

The New World of our time, now in the making, stands poised and trembling between the message of Jesus Christ—belief in the supreme power of the spiritual over the material, in the sacredness of human personality, in the living presence here and now of an overruling God—as against such godless thinking as the communists proclaim—faith in material might as the supreme power in the world, a belief in the right of the strong to enrich themselves by the exploitation of the weak, and the seeking of an international society based not upon human welfare but upon each nation's separately seeking its own selfish objectives.

Today's New World

Today in the Far East, the Soviet Union—like a great reservoir—is piping out streams of contaminating communism throughout Asia. The developing situation in Asia comes to us with a distinct shock. Only a tiny fringe of people in Asia today are Christian.

China, with its 450 millions of people, already has become engulfed in communism. In Red China the older Christian generation is dying off; youth is being forced into communist ways of thinking. The very life of the message of Christianity there is today at stake.

In India, out of a population of some 375 millions, less than nine millions are Christians—less than 3 per cent. In Thailand, less than 2 per cent of the population is Christian.

The great Mohammedan world, extending through central and western Asia, through Iran and Arabia and Pakistan, and, on the northern shores of Africa, through Egypt, Algeria and Morocco, continues seemingly almost untouched by the impact of Christian missions.

Japan is yet a power to be reckoned with. The Japanese people today—disillusioned, frustrated, questioning—sense the need of a new way forward.

Will it be the way of Christianity?

Do Christians realize that a third of all the people in the world are already engulfed in communist? Communism is a fighting faith. It is steadily advancing. Christianity in great areas of Asia is being throttled.

In the face of our secular 20th century civilization, tempestuous and spectacular, what can Christians actually do to build a better world?

Christians surely must be working

n many fronts. There is no field of man endeavor in which Christianity annot play a dramatic and uplifting art. Among the most appealing of ese is the challenging work of Amer-an Christian denominations through hurch World Service in ministering human want.

Ministry to Human Want

Our minds go back to Christ. Sur-rising as it may seem, he spent the reater part of his ministry not in the uilding of churches or the organiza-on of religious groups, but in mani-esting his love through the healing of ricken men and women, helping for ve's sake to meet sore need.

Today in vast areas of Asia and frica, men and women are suffering nd dying in want and hunger. They ack the help which perhaps only we an give.

Not long ago I was in South Korea. Never have I witnessed such stark and idespread human need. Men, women nd children lack elemental human ecessities — shelter, food, clothing, edicine. Thousands and thousands f refugees have had to flee with their amilies from their homes, stripped of ll belongings and with no means of arning their livelihood. Countless housands are living in boxes of houses, oughly constructed of cardboard, raps of frayed tin and roofing, roken boards and refuse, without lumbing or windows or other neces-aries, dirty, unkempt, unsanitary, im-ossible. Disease and epidemics wait round the corner.

Some 100,000 orphans in South Korea are homeless, with no one to are for them. They are on the streets, egging or stealing. Their resulting oral future is ominous to contem-late.

In South Korea, apart from the housands of disabled soldiers, more han 20,000 civilian amputees—men, omen and children—have lost one or oth arms or legs in the bombing of ities and villages. The sight of those ttle boys and girls lying in hospital ribs or on the streets with only tumps for arms and legs wrings one's eart.

I wonder if Christianity ever before aced quite such a challenge of appal-ng human need.

Heartbreaking Need

Throughout Asia and Africa and the Middle East are areas of heartbreak-ng need. In some of these life ex-ectancy at birth is only 32 years. One ut of every three babies dies before s first birthday. Those suffering from alaria in Asia today equal the total opulation of the Western hemisphere, nd every year some 3,000,000 of these ufferers die.

The United Nations Food and Agri-ulture Organization reports that fully alf the world's people are still inade-uately housed, clothed and nourished.

The Mohammedan world is not eeting this tragic far-flung need. Neither is the Buddhist world. Neither are the Hindus.

Were Christ living today, in the face of the appalling need, is there any doubt which way he would turn? Would he not be, as of old, feeding the hungry—those hungry in body as well as in soul—bringing help to individual suffering men and women?

Is it not the clear duty of the Christian churches to lead the way? Should not the Christian churches be working even more powerfully along the lines which Christ taught 1900 years ago?

Church World Service, on behalf of the Protestant churches of America, on behalf of you and me, is doing just that. To peoples suffering and in sore distress, many of them uprooted and driven from their homes, Church World Service, in humility and love—and in tangible terms—is interpreting the spirit of Christ.

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available for free distribution to needy peoples. Church World Service, seizing upon this rare opportunity through its "Share-Our-Surplus" program, in 1955 delivered to the hungry people of Asia, Africa and the Middle East and to Europe and South America some 100,000,000 pounds valued at over $35,000,000.

Since November 1954, when the "SOS" program began, more than 9,500,000—persons in countries all over the free world—mostly hungry children—have received at least one glass of milk every day through such volunta agency programs.

The problems of refugees tormen our modern world as never befo Nearly a million Arabs, living in t tered tents, caves or makeshift dwe ings haunt the Near East; some 60 000 refugees from Red China are gat ered around Hong Kong; 900,000 a uprooted in central Europe, their nu bers increased daily by hundreds caping from behind the iron curtai and in South Korea are hundreds thousands more, fighting for life und the most pitiful conditions.

To these countless refugees, u rooted from their homes and all th love, Church World Service—in whi 35 communions and denominations c operate—is bringing food and hel Similarly it is ministering to the vi tims of disaster in many lands and widows, orphans and the aged.

It is pushing forward in a progra of resettlement of refugees in t United States. It is undertaking pr grams of relief and reconstruction 29 areas in Asia and Europe.

It is entirely through our individu help and support that Church Wor Service functions. If the Christians America give it the assistance and f nancial help it asks, the world ma gain a new understanding of wha Christ's love can mean against distre and disaster.

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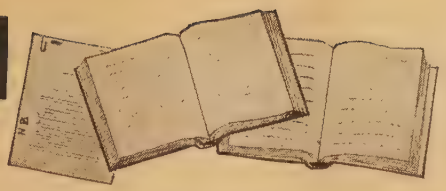
Jan. 29-Feb. 5—Youth Week.
Feb. 5—5th Sunday after Epiphany.
Feb. 12—Race Relations Sunday.
Feb. 15—Ash Wednesday.
Feb. 17—World Day of Prayer.
Feb. 19—1st Sunday in Lent. Day of Prayer for Students.
Feb. 19-26—Brotherhood Week.
Feb. 26—2nd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 4—3rd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 11—4th Sunday in Lent. One Great Hour of Sharing.
Mar. 18—Passion Sunday.
Mar. 25—The Annunciation.
Mar. 25—Palm Sunday.
Mar. 25-31—Holy Week.
Mar. 29—Maundy Thursday.
Mar. 30—Good Friday.
Apr. 1—Easter.
Apr. 8—1st Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 15—Christian College Day.
Apr. 22—3rd Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 29—4th Sunday after Easter.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of national or religious significance.)

Nota Bene



ROBABLY the present American taboo against what is called "religious controversy" is as bad for religion as it is for atheism. It means that great concepts of religion are rarely discussed frankly in public by curious, independent thinkers. Religious literature suffers from too much blandness; it lacks vitality and vigor. It is wrapped in the sterilized cotton wool of hypocritical respect.—*Paul Blanshard,* The Right to Read: The Battle Against Censorship *(Boston: Beacon Press, 1955.)**

H. G. WELLS . . . reminded her [Gertrude Stein] of the rice paddies in her native California. Acres and acres of shiny water, but never more than two inches deep."—*Aldous Huxley,* The Genius and the Goddess *(New York: Harper, 1955).**

S we are of intellectual integrity, we cannot accept religious truths on the authority of someone else. As we are of intellectual humility, we cannot suppose that there is no truth except such as we may derive from the process of our syllogisms.—*Nathaniel Micklem,* Ultimate Questions *(Nashville: Abingdon, 1955).**

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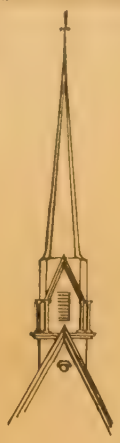

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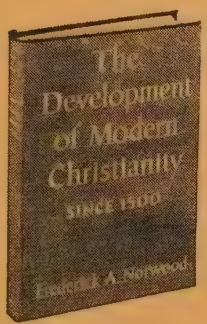

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Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

'O Come, Let Us Worship'

THE older I grow, the more on my guard I become when I hear my clerical colleagues wax eloquent and throaty regarding the "Worship Service." It would be scarcely short of sacrilege even to dream of spelling those two words, as they enunciate them, lower case, not to mention raising the question as to the propriety of using a noun so clumsily and, without apparent necessity, as an adjective. Actually "service of worship" should carry with it an equal aura of holiness. But my friends, although ready to split infinitives and to follow verbs of primary sequence with quite ungrammatical "should's" and "might's," seem to find in this two-word appellative a more soul-satisfying description. In this day when we "contact members," "chair meetings" and "pastor churches," it would, alas, seem a mere quibble to comment further on so trivial a matter.

But worse to me than the term coined to describe it are some of the "skills" being employed to adorn it. I have never been a wholehearted admirer of the so-called responsive reading. To me—I frankly admit I may be prejudiced, and I hasten to confess this horrid guilt in the hope that thereby I may render it unnecessary for several readers to expend hard-earned money for the posting of letters either to me or to the editor pointing out that unmistakably evident sorry fact—to me (I repeat) this portion of the service is the least attractive.

Instruments of Worship

I greatly enjoy the hearty congregational singing of hymns—providing the bright boys who edit hymnals have not made their hand too heavy in putting asunder words and tunes which custom and, I firmly believe, consecrated common sense have long joined forces in putting together. Judiciously selected and well-read passages of Scripture can be a high light in the service. The careless selection of a few verses from a narrowly restricted handful of "familiar passages," and their stumbling and uninspired reading, appear to me to stand very high on the debit side of the ledger. For too many people it is the only contact of the week with what has been through the years a heritage not to be despised. The so-called "long prayer," properly and bitterly criticized as the nadir in many a service, may be made just the reverse. If th preacher would expend upon prepara tion for this prayer half the time h puts upon his sermon, it might easil become a moment of rich value rathe than an example of thoughtless an tasteless verbiage, delivered with bot the eyes and mind resolutely shut. Th opportunity for genuine worship whic the offering provides, I highly prize, a I have confessed in an earlier column and I deplore all attempts as mis guided in the extreme which seek t apologize for its presence or to bow i out of the picture. Nor need I say more of the sermon than that in my eyes no service of worship is complet without it. I fail utterly to sympathize with or even to understand the attitude that it is expendable. A sermon may be dull, pointless, an outrageous waste o the congregation's time. The remedy is not to omit the sermon but to hire a competent preacher. The church has been strong when the pulpit has had something to say and knew how to say it. It stands—at least it does in the tradition dear to many of us—as the central pillar in the whole structure. Without it the edifice is doomed to destruction.

Liturgical Repartee

But in contrast to these tried-and-true parts of genuine congregational worship, so important and so often sadly mistreated by our modern engineers of sacred sanctuary worship, are other elements which appear to me of far less value. And the responsive reading stands high in this latter list. To be sure, it gives the congregation another opportunity to engage audibly in the common worship, but surely this same value can be achieved more naturally in other ways, notably in the hearty singing of hymns of praise and aspiration. If this ecclesiastical version of a game of "catch" between pulpit and pew must be engaged in, it should be rigorously controlled, with material definitely antiphonal, in a word, from the Psalter. The arbitrary cleavage of scriptural passages—narratives, parables, the Pauline letters—into bifurcated sections for liturgical repartee appears to me little short of stupid. Still worse is the introduction of modern and conspicuously "momentarily apt" litanies in which the minister carries the principal load, with the congregation docilely responding at irreg-

Income Tax Ruling

[From Chicago Tribune, *"Investors' Guide." Used by permission.*]

A SPECIAL income tax ruling applying to ministers, of interest to pastors and members of their congregations, was issued recently by the internal revenue service. It explains new provisions in the 1954 code concerning the housing allowances paid to ministers in lieu of providing a parsonage.

As under the old law, the rental value of a parsonage provided as part of the minister's compensation is exempt from tax. The new provision, contained in section 107 of the code, permits any rental allowance paid to the minister as part of his compensation to be excluded from his gross income, as tax exempt, to the extent that it is actually used to rent or provide a home.

Questions Answered in Detail

Many questions had arisen as to just what expenses qualify as part of the cost of providing a home. These are answered, in detail, in the bureau's special ruling, which was drafted in question and answer form.

The new tax-free allowance is broad enough to cover amounts spent by the minister to buy a home as well as rent one.

The ruling says the "rental allowance" includes such items as utilities but not maid service. If the minister owns his home or is buying one, the excludable allowance includes amounts expended for the home and for its running expenses other than food and servants.

"That portion of the allowance may be excluded to the extent that it is used for the maintenance and purchase of the home, such as the down payment, installment payments on loans secured by mortgages on the home, interest, taxes, and repairs," says the bureau.

Rental Allowance Specifications

Even if the exclusions cover amounts spent for interest and taxes these expenses also still are deductible if the minister itemizes them in the appropriate schedule of his tax return.

It is important that churches having no parsonage stipulate that part of the minister's salary represents a rental allowance. No part of the compensation may be excluded from gross income as a home allowance unless the church specifies that it is paid to provide a home.

Ministers on the faculties of colleges operated by religious groups are exempt from tax on allowances for quarters, "if the duties performed are ordinarily the duties of a minister of the gospel."

---

ar intervals with "Hear us, O Lord" some ecclesiastical equivalent. After e such gasps I find myself irreverently wondering if by this time the nniscient Lord doesn't know that we ant him to hear us (or the preacher). houghts of that sort may be low and nworthy, but surely a service of worip is not a conspicuous success when has such an effect on many of the ngregation—I refuse to believe that am uniquely unregenerate.

Then there are those sudden and increasingly frequent periods of sepulral silence, during which all are supsed to be worshiping in vacuum. But at growing malady deserves a colnn all its own in the not-too-distant ture.

N. B.

IT is difficult to believe in the Incarnation, but one thing is even more difficult, and that is to deny the Incarnation, while still taking Jesus seriously.—*Andrew W. Blackwood, Jr.*, When God Came Down *(Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955).**

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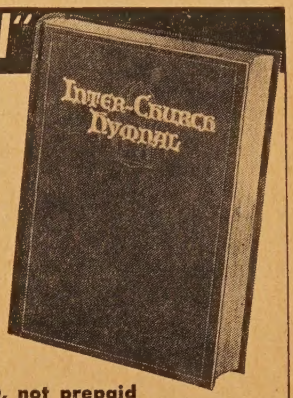

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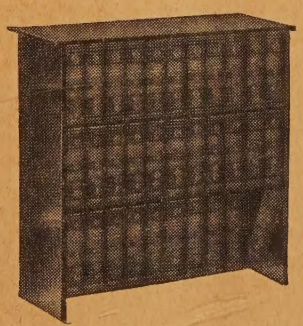

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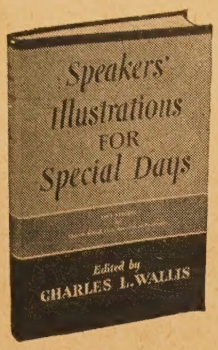

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Books Preachers Are Reading

HANDBOOK OF DENOMINATIONS. *By Frank S. Mead. Abingdon, $2.95.* It is almost like old times to find a book as big and as important as this one, well-printed and well-bound, for less than $3.00. I don't know who will be the loser—author or publisher—in the arrangement that makes the old-fashioned price possible, but I do know that the buyer cannot possibly lose. Here is the standard reference on denominations in the United States, revised, enlarged and brought up to date. In all, 266 churches, sects and cults are described with balanced statements of their origins, history, beliefs and present status. It is a marvel of organization and concision. There are plenty of specific questions that come up all the time which you could hardly answer without having this book, or knowing someone handy who does have it. Even without specific questions to ask it, the book is a fascinating orientation for churchmen who are concerned about where they and their denomination stand in the church's total scheme of things.

CHRISTIAN LOVE IN EVERYDAY LIVING. *By Owen Hutchison. 94 pages. Westminster, $2.00.* In nine good sermons, the late Owen Hutchison interpreted I Corinthians 13 currently, personally, practically. As will be expected by readers of the sermon "Jesus and His Choices" which appears on page 13 of this issue of The Pulpit, the sermon series which makes up the little book is direct in style, rich in telling illustrations, and unavoidable in its implications. This was solid preaching. Its early silencing is tragic; its publication is occasion for Christian gratitude.

THE CATHOLIC APPROACH TO PROTESTANTISM. *By George H. Tavard. 160 pages. Harper, $2.50.* Some of the statements in this book will infuriate any Protestant, but the publication of the book should rejoice every Protestant. The maddening sections are those analyzing certain forms and statements of Protestantism, where we will all feel scant justice is done us. But far outbalancing those paragraphs are chapters full of evidence that ecumenical concern is not all on our side, that at least some on the other side have been following appreciatively our own ecumenical efforts, that some over there want to make our separate monologues into real dialogue. Not for Father Tavard the name-calling, derision and anathemas we usually get from Romanists. Instead, the book can be read as a kind of overture from a Roman who would rather we talked to each other than about each other. The view of the church which he elaborates reminds us too of how great and crucial are the differences we must talk about. It is hard to know for who French Father Tavard is writing. T book has the Imprimatur of the Bisho of Scranton, but Father Tavard is priest in Cardinal Spellman's dioces Roman unity is obviously not witho its creaks and strains. In Tavard strain lies its promise.

HIGH IS THE WALL. *By Ruth Mui head Berry. 268 pages. Muhlenber Press, $3.50.* Here is a book to give t the puzzled Protestant contemplatin marriage with a Roman Catholic, bu willing to look before he leaps. Pai this novel with James Pike's earlier *I You Marry Outside Your Fait* (Harper) and you will have told you troubled inquirer all there is to say Dr. Pike lined up the facts of the case now Mrs. Berry's novel tells the stor of all that is involved. With deep sym pathy for and penetrating insight int the motivations and reactions of Prot estant bride and Roman Catholi groom, the author tells what happens to the marriage of two serious, intelli gent, well-intentioned people separate in their deepest allegiances. The story moves quickly, characters sound true there is style and humor enough, and the conclusion is as hard to face as the facts. Protestants should recom mend this novel to anyone facing the problem—it would be no kindness to give it to anyone already in the prob lem. The book is well done and true.

THE LEGEND OF THE BAAL-SHEM. *By Martin Buber. 222 pages. Harper, $2.75.* Most of us know Martin Buber as the Jewish contributor of the "I-Thou" analysis to contemporary Protestant theology. Some know him for other essays in religion and politics. But now Americans will be able to see him in his own context, to discover with his help just what is the background for all his thinking. Buber is a member of the Jewish sect of the Hasidim. The founder of their mystical strain in modern Judaism was Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, or Baal-Shem, who lived in eastern Europe between 1700 and 1760. His teaching was largely done with stories and parables, establishing more a mood, a frame of mind, than a theology. In his telling of the old legends, Martin Buber has made them as penetrating, suggestive, lovely and moving as they must have been in their oral tradition to have captivated, then convinced, the brilliant scholar. The cardinal elements in Hasidism, as Buber indicates in his introductory essay, are ecstasy, service, intention and humility. Twenty graceful and atmospheric legends make those points over and over again. So do Christian preachers. Get it?

T.A.G.

Wish to Retire . . .'

HE letter of resignation submitted recently by Samuel Harkness to the nnetka Congregational Church, in cago's North Shore suburb, came to e Pulpit from Albert Joseph Mc-tney, minister emeritus of the Na-al Presbyterian Church, Washing-, D. C., who called the letter "a ssic of its kind that might well merit ensive reading."

Dr. Harkness, in giving the editors mission to print his letter, wrote: his brings to mind an evening I spent ars ago with Sinclair Lewis and H. L. ncken. They had been on the west st together and had attended one of meetings of a lady evangelist. ncken said (he had dug up all the t): 'Her first husband needed conso-ion, so the Lord called him home, but r second husband left under his own am.' A letter of resignation is easier write when you are leaving under ur own steam."

The Harkness letter to members and ends of the Winnetka church follows:

"This is not an easy letter to write, t it will permit me to put my situa-n before you directly and intimately, d to avoid the emotional strain of aking a verbal statement from the lpit.

"I wish to retire from the active min-ry December 31, 1955, staying over r the communion service, January 1, 56. I should like to close my ministry th the observance of the sacrament.

"This is not a sudden decision. I am owing old and find my work, particu-rly the preaching, an increasingly avy burden. My wife and I want to end whatever years remain to us qui-ly, free from the conviction that if we ere younger we could do more and do better. This decision is made without ar because you have created a pension ovision in your church trust fund for e care of those who have served and ll serve you across the years.

"You are the most understanding and sponsive congregation I have ever own. During my ministry, we have rried two great building projects rough to completion. Even so, there s never been any sense of pulling in posite directions—at least, as far as I ve known. We have thought things rough together and acted with mutual st and affection.

"The satisfaction I have found in eaching has come from the incentive learn and grow I have found in you d in your willingness to let me stand your pulpit and tell the truth as it tered my mind. I have tried not to use the freedom you gave me when u called me to be your minister over enty-five years ago. And my wife and hall always cherish the honor you nferred upon us in the naming of rkness Hall.

'As we recall the sacred hours we ve spent together in God's house and shared joys and sorrows which have pened our feelings of comradeship, we trust that we shall have an abiding place in your hearts, as you will have in ours.

"Your friend,
"SAMUEL HARKNESS."

Pastorial Intercession

By Prentice Douglas

Methodist, Cropsey, Ill.

RECENTLY I heard a minister say that he had "ceased to believe in intercessory prayer." Looking up the word "intercede" in Strong's *Concordance,* I found that every reference had to do with prayer for others, the strongest being: "Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you." (I Sam. 12:23).

Do I pray for my people—often, spontaneously, habitually, consistently? Is prayer for others a vital part of my ministry?

Most of us assume the efficacy of personal private devotions, and many would say that "closet" communion is necessary to their spiritual well-being. But what about a pastoral ministry of spiritual intercession? Let's be consistent: Do we believe in the ministry of prayer, or not?

Of course, if I think of the ministry of intercession as being mere spiritual "lobbying," or a sort of pastoral sleep-walking—something presumptuous, extraneous and far-fetched—then it cannot be, for me, a successful pursuit. But if, out of sincere concern for souls, I seek to relate my people to the Source of Help, how can I, in prayer, miss this vital goal?

It is my earnest conviction that, until the minister comes to think of prayer not only as a personal encounter but as a distinct and significant pastoral office, his spiritual ministry is much less effective than it might be.

This is not to say that in "the secret place" the minister can iron out all the brow-wrinkling problems with which he is confronted. Nor is it to suggest that a perfunctory practice of methodical name calling on our knees can avail great help for our people. But, real, soul-felt concern, harnessed by spiritual habit to the total vehicle of our pastoral office, can well be the saving link between the minister and his people. Through prayer—silent, perhaps, and secret—the shepherd-servant helps to connect the invisible elements that make for happy and effective relationships throughout his parish.

"And all the people said to Samuel, 'Pray for your servants' . . . And Samuel said to the people, 'Fear not . . . far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you.'"

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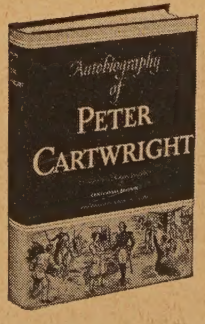

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